

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



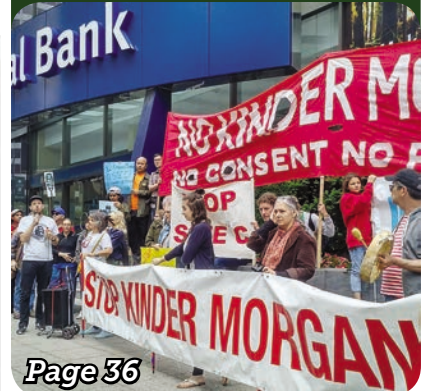
Fire This Time!

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING IN VENEZUELA?



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CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!



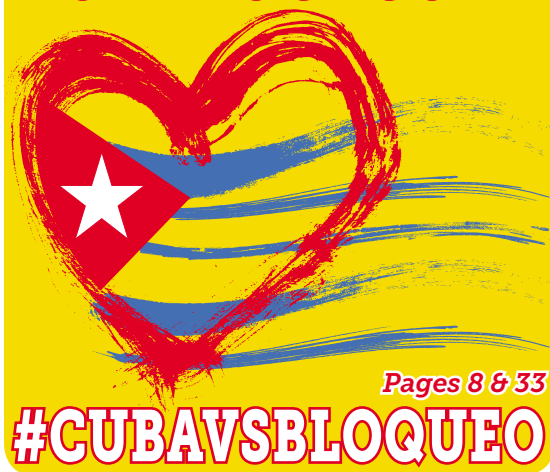
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U.S. OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!

By Nita Palmer

More US and NATO soldiers are headed for Afghanistan. In a quiet announcement June 13, US President Donald Trump gave the green light to the Pentagon to send nearly four thousand additional troops to the war-torn country. These troops would be joined by three thousand additional forces promised by NATO, bringing total troop numbers in Afghanistan to nearly 20,000.

This decision comes after months of pressure from US military officials and calls from top US commander in Afghanistan General John Nicholson to send more troops to break up what he has called a 'stalemate' between the US/NATO forces and the Taliban and other armed groups resisting the sixteen year

long occupation.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis explained the US strategy in Afghanistan to the Senate Armed Services Committee in June. The New York Times reports that, "[t]he idea, [Mattis] said, would be to drive down the violence to a level that could be managed by Afghan government forces with the help of American and allied troops in training their Afghan counterparts, providing intelligence and delivering what Mr. Mattis called "high-end capability," an apparent allusion to air power and possibly Special Operations forces. The result, he said, would be an "era of frequent skirmishing," but not a situation in which the Afghan government no longer faced a mortal threat.

In short, the US government's idea of 'victory' in Afghanistan is permanent war.

Tragedy of War

Sixteen years of war has hardly brought the promised end to terrorism and better



life for Afghans. Civilian casualties are climbing year over year, with at least 1600 killed in the first half of 2016 alone. Nearly all were children.

A brief look at living conditions for Afghanistan's children tells us much about the future the US and NATO are building for Afghanistan. The United Nations reports that humanitarian conditions are deteriorating in Afghanistan in 2017, with 13% more people in dire need of aid, particularly to address acute health and nutrition emergencies. The United Nations Children's Fund reports that mothers and children are at greatest risk, with more than 41% of Afghan children already experiencing stunted growth due to malnutrition.

Nearly 40% of Afghans live below the poverty line, forcing many children to work to support their families. Tens of thousands of Afghan children – some as young as five – have to work, often in mining or industrial jobs. Many are not able to attend school – if there are even functioning schools available in the area

HOW THE U.S. IS EXTENDING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Photos from top,clockwise. 1. The U.S. is adding nearly 4000 more troops to Afghanistan. 2. Protest against U.S bombing of Afghanistan. Kabul. April 16, 2017. 3. Boy at protest against Trump's visit to Belgium. Brussels. May 24, 2017. 4. Protest against U.S bombing of Afghanistan. Ottawa, Canada. April 16, 2017.



where they live.

The US alone has spent hundreds of billions of dollars on the war in Afghanistan, yet has failed to improve even the most basic living conditions for the Afghan people. Children in Afghanistan today face not only poverty and lack of access to education, but all the trauma of war as well. Is this really the better future that the US and NATO are building in the country?

US Strategy: Permanent War and Occupation

This war has been a great tragedy for the Afghan people. It has cost billions to taxpayers in the US, Canada, and other NATO countries, even as those governments cry that there is no money for basic necessities like health care and education for their own citizens. It has been a devastating tragedy for the

families of soldiers who have lost their lives in this war.

And for what purpose? Acts of terrorism are more frequent today than ever, both in Afghanistan and around the world. The terrorists of ISIS/Daesh are gaining a stronger foothold in Afghanistan each day, and much of the country is now ruled again by brutal warlords.

This war certainly has not brought peace or human rights to Afghanistan, yet the US government and their allies in NATO have no plan to end it soon, as Mattis made clear to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The long-term strategy isn't to end the war but to turn Afghanistan into a permanent military base through permanent occupation. Afghanistan has long been coveted as an economically and militarily strategic land, perfectly situated

between the resource-rich lands of Africa and the Middle East, and near Russia and China, both rising economic powers and competitors with the US.

The Trump administration is arrogantly throwing more money at this war and putting more lives on the line – as did the Obama and Bush administrations before – not for the betterment of Afghan lives or American or global security, but to set up a permanent occupation for their own strategic and economic interests.

More troops are not going to end this war. If this war is ever to end, all troops must be withdrawn and Afghans must be able to determine their country's future for themselves. It's time to end this war now!

*Follow Nita Palmer on Twitter:
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REPEAL BILL C-51! SCRAP BILL C-59!



JUSTIN TRUDEAU, WE DO NOT ACCEPT PARTIAL HUMAN RIGHTS

By Thomas Davies

Justin Trudeau is the same as that slick used car dealer in the movies: He gives you a great price on a shiny car, which then breaks down a block away from the dealership. His latest lemon is the Liberals new Bill C-59. This proposed law is their long promised “fix” of the Harper government’s controversial “National Security” Bill C-51. Passing Bill C-51 in 2016 ensured the end of almost 10 years of Conservative rule after massive public backlash against its wholesale disregard for human rights in the name of “fighting terrorism”. Now Justin Trudeau has added some touch up paint and an air freshener and is trying to sell us that same car again.

Bill C-51 greatly expanded police, spy agency, and government agency’s powers to spy on, detain and limit our democratic and human rights. Among vast changes, it granted CSIS undefined powers of “disruption” which included explicitly violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 17 Government agencies were given the ability to share our personal and private information without a warrant, and the law’s language was so broad that countless legal experts pointed out it could be used to limit the freedom of practically anyone.

Crucially, as an open letter signed by Amnesty International, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association, the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, La Ligue des Droits et Libertés and the National Council of Canadian Muslim pointed out, “Throughout

the Parliamentary hearings on Bill C-51, not a single witness offered a concrete example of how the draconian measures in Bill C-51 would better protect public safety.”

So for two years we’ve been living under this anti-human law that the government never even justified in the first place.

Public Relations Government

It took Trudeau’s Liberals a year and half to introduce Bill C-59, just as parliament is about to take a 3 month summer break. In the meantime, everything they’ve done on the file of human rights and security have been meaningless public relations stunts. Their proposed national security oversight committee? All of its members will be appointed by the Prime Minister’s Office, and the information it receives and shares must also be approved. The Liberal “public consultation” on national security? Despite promising to release the data of all the submissions they received, they instead opted to hide that and release a slick report written by a controversial New York public relations firm.

Bill C-59 – More Style Than Substance

Now we have Bill C-59 – which at 150 pages is long and difficult to summarize, just like its predecessor. It includes a new national security review committee and an intelligence commissioner, a tightening of language and increased burden of proof required before detaining someone for supporting terrorism, new limitations on how CSIS can violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and it is slightly more difficult to pre-emptively detain people without criminal

charge.

So if all these are improvements, what’s there to complain about?

Most importantly, if all of Bill C-59 is passed our human rights are still overall much behind where we were when it’s predecessor Bill C-51 was first passed. Taking one step forward after taking 12 steps back is not a victory. Especially when we didn’t need to step backwards in the first place.

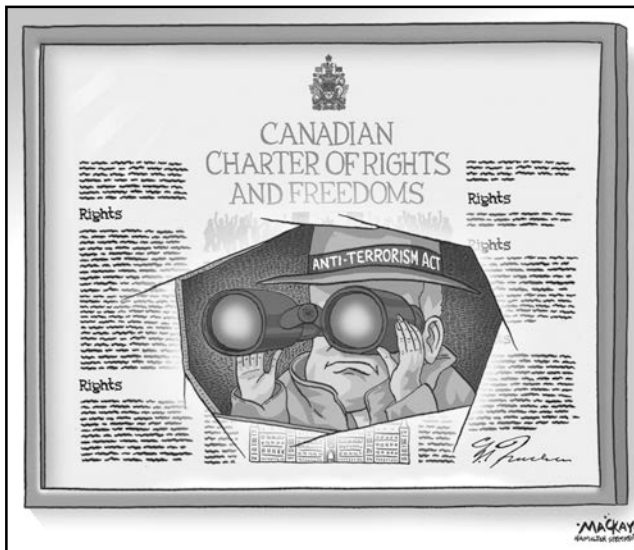
Crucially, CSIS still has powers of “disruption” which include “limiting” the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Under Bill C-59 they would have also have broad new immunity from prosecution for breaking laws!

17 different government agencies will still be sharing your personal information without a warrant.

Police will still be able to preventative detain us without charges for a week. They can continue to intimidate people into signing “peace bonds” limiting their freedoms.

CSIS would have explicit new data collection capabilities to use against the public, and the secretive Communications Security Establishment (CSE) would have new powers to launch defensive and offensive cyber attacks around the world.

All of this, and a whole lot more, and they still haven’t explained how this would make us any safer. Remember that countries like the U.S., France and England have shown that continually beefing up “anti-terrorism” laws by taking away rights and freedoms is completely ineffective in actually combating terrorism –



in fact it does the opposite.

Human Rights Should Not be Up for Negotiations

Some mainstream media commentators as well as some of Bill C-51's original critics have stated that Bill C-59's measures, "get a lot of things right" are "solid gains" or are a "step forward". This misses the point though. Human rights should never be up for negotiation. Bill C-51 was a massive, broad, unnecessary and unjustified attack on our fundamental human rights. Anything short of the full Repeal of Bill C-51 which hundreds of thousands of people across Canada repeatedly demanded is still overall a step backwards.

It could also be tempting to say, "Well right now I feel comfortable expressing my opinion without getting put in jail or on a 'no fly' list." This may be true for some people, but it's not usually about what is happening right now but could or will happen down the road. Just because you don't need to use all the tools in your toolbox immediately doesn't mean you don't always want them there.

The government is always fine with opposition, as long as it doesn't feel threatened.

In 2010, almost 1105 people were arrested in the largest mass arrest in Canadian history during the G20 Summit in Toronto. The vast majority were taking part in peaceful protests and were later released without

charges. Only one senior police officer was found guilty of "misconduct" and ordered to forfeit 30 paid days six years later.

This was before C-51 and C-59. What is possible now is much great and much more dangerous. What is needed is more safeguards on our rights, not less.

They Will Use It Against Us

Overall, the Liberals know that life is continually getting worse for poor and working people across Canada. While they recently announced they will increase military spending 70%, hospitals and schools are falling apart. People can't afford to live anymore – with the average debt to income ratio at 169.4% – up 23% from a decade ago! Obviously, this creates anger, frustration, and demands for change. This is why Bill C-51 was created, and why Bill C-59 doesn't address its fundamental violations. The Canadian government is preparing to deal with unrest as it continues its policies of wars and occupations abroad, and cutbacks at home. Trudeau's campaign slogan was "Real Change Now". It's obvious he will not deliver. It's time for people to take up that slogan for themselves, and we can start by Repealing Bill C-51 and Scrapping Bill C-59!

Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
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CAMPAIGN TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS CONTINUES!

By Thomas Davies

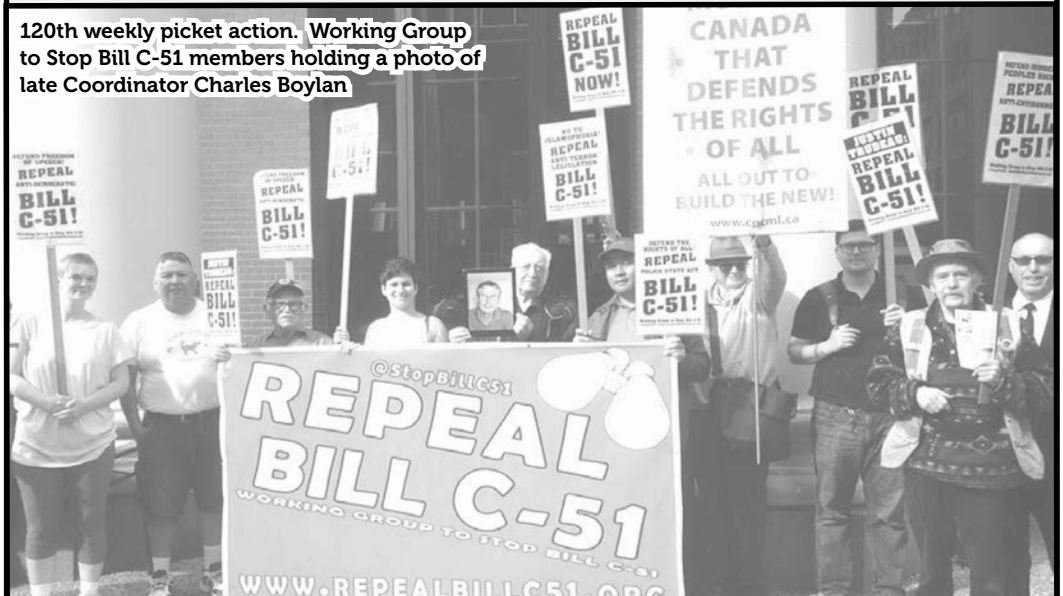
June was a month of perseverance and commitment for the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51. On the evening of June 17, our coordinator, Charles Boylan, passed away after a courageous fight to overcome prostate cancer. Charles was a lifelong social justice organizer and one of the founding members of the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51. Even in his final days Charles remained passionately committed to repealing Bill C-51, and we will continue this struggle!

The Working Group dedicated our 120th weekly picket two days later to Charles, and true to his legacy, refused to be removed by security guards while also holding a photo of him as part of the action.

After stalling for a year and a half, the Liberal Party also finally released their plan to "fix" Bill C-51, with the confusingly named Bill C-59. The details of how this does not address the fundamental human rights concerns of Bill C-51 are contained in another article this issue, but suffice to say the Working Group has integrated the demand to "Scrap Bill C-59!" into our actions and has begun the important public education process about the Bill and its fundamental flaws.

Through the hot summer months the Working Group continues to alternate between pickets and banner drops, and has managed to find new locations for both in Coquitlam and Burnaby. This has been a struggle of 121 consecutive weeks over more than two years, but we remain committed to defending our fundamental human and democratic rights!

120th weekly picket action. Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 members holding a photo of late Coordinator Charles Boylan



By Azza Rojbi

Seven years and more than 300,000 people have lost their lives in the war in Syria. The so-called 'civil war' started in 2011, created and fuelled by the United States and their imperialist allies. Money and weapons were quick to pour into Syria to support the so-called 'moderate rebels' to overthrow the Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad. This U.S. policy of arming and funding anti-government forces in Syria has resulted in the rise of Daesh (ISIS/ISIL) and other terrorist organizations. Those are the same terrorist organizations that the U.S.-led coalition today claims to be fighting against in Syria and Iraq.

The U.S. never had the well-being of the Syrian people in mind, just as they never had the interests of Afghan, Iraqi or Yemeni people at heart. Despite over 7 years of their media and military campaign against the Syrian government, the balance of forces in Syria is not in the favour of the United States and its imperialist allies.

Success of the Syrian Resistance

With the help of Russia and Iran, the Syrian Arab Army has launched many successful military offensives against ISIS & other terrorist groups and now control the majority of Syria's main cities. Of course, the mainstream media avoids talking about this successful campaign and instead continues its lies and deceptions. We saw this most clearly in the case of the liberation of Aleppo.

You might remember the photos of the five-year-old boy, Omran Daqneesh, sitting in an ambulance, bloodied, covered with dust, and looking stunned. That photograph was used extensively by the Syrian 'rebels' and the mainstream media

in their campaign against the Syrian government. However, new photos and videos of Omran have recently emerged showing him well and healthy with his family. Speaking to reporters his father said that his son had been used as a "propaganda tool" by rebel forces.

Omran and his family's story is not unique. The U.S. government and the so-called 'moderate rebels' in Syria have been

groups.

"Assad must go" No more! Cracks between imperialist forces on how to deal with Syria

The Trump administration has continued and escalated its military intervention in Syria under the pretext of fighting ISIS and terrorism. According to an article in the New Yorker magazine, "President

Syria: Imperialists Divided!



A Victory for All of Us!

twisting facts and spreading lies to deceive peace-loving people into supporting further bombing and intervention in Syria. Despite all of these attempts, the tides are turning against the U.S. government and their mercenaries. Their deception is being debunked by the flux of Syrian refugees returning back to their homes, the same refugees that were portrayed as fleeing the atrocities of the Assad government.

According to a statement by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) spokesperson Andrej Mahecic, more than 440,000 internally displaced Syrians and about 31,000 of those who fled abroad have come back. Mahecic also said that most of the refugees have returned to the cities of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus. Of course, he failed to mention that these 4 cities are all controlled by the Syrian government after its major territorial gains against ISIS and other terrorist

Trump has widened the scope of U.S. intervention [in Syria], both in terms of its targets and its message". On June 18, a U.S. warplane shot down a Syrian army jet in the southern Raqqa countryside to defend their mercenaries which were losing ground to government forces. A Syrian army statement condemned this "flagrant attack" on Syria's sovereignty and said that this attack "comes at a time when the Syrian army and its allies were making clear advances in fighting the [Islamic State] terrorist group."

In addition to attacks on Syrian government forces, the U.S. airstrikes have killed 300 civilians in Syria since March 21 according to a UN panel investigation. Where is the media outrage over this loss of life at the hand of U.S. imperialism?

All this escalation by the U.S. in Syria is yet another attempt to boost their mercenary forces on the ground and continue their campaign to overthrow

the Syrian government. The U.S. is getting more and more nervous as the reality on the ground in Syria is shifting in the favour of the Syrian government. This change is also putting a lot of pressure on several countries to adjust their policy on Syria, away from the United States' interests.

In an interview with several European media outlets, the new French president Emmanuel Macron said, "The new perspective that I have had on this subject is that I have not stated that Bashar al-Assad's departure is a pre-condition for everything because nobody has shown me a legitimate successor [...] My lines are clear: Firstly, a complete fight against all the terrorist groups. They are our enemies. [...] We need everybody's cooperation, especially Russia, to eradicate them." Macron also said that "[France] was wrong to join the war in Libya. What were the outcomes of these invasions? Destroyed countries in which terrorist groups thrive. I do not want that to happen in Syria".

Macron's statement represents a significant change in France's position on the Syrian crisis. Likewise, Italy and Germany have both dropped the "Assad

Must Go" line and both expressed that the future of Assad and his government can only be resolved with political negotiation with the Syrian government.

This political development is very significant as it shows a division among imperialist powers on how to solve the problems within Syria. This crack among imperialist countries is happening as a result of the success of the Syrian resistance against the U.S. and other imperialists' intervention on the country. This also shows the deep crisis that the U.S.-backed Syrian opposition is facing.

This change of heart by France, Germany and other European countries is not based on good intentions, or a desire to help the Syria people. They realize that the Syrian government is winning the war against terrorism in the country and they don't want to lose all influence in the region to Russia, China and Iran. They also want to make sure they are included in the hundreds of billions of dollars of contracts for the reconstruction of Syria.

Hands Off Syria!

Political dynamics in the Middle East are changing against the U.S. and their mercenaries and it is a positive change for the people of Syria that have suffered over 7 years of imposed war and destruction. It puts the Syrian resistance in a better position to



Famous photo of Omran Daqneesh a bombing victim in ambulance



Recently Omran Daqneesh's father has come out saying that his son's photo was used as a "propaganda tool" by rebel forces

continue its fight and advancement against ISIS and US backed rebels. For sure they are winning against the U.S. and other imperialist powers.

Ultimately no matter if you agree or disagree with the Syrian government, the real question is: will its overthrow by the U.S. and their mercenaries put the Syrian people in a better position? Do the U.S. and its allies really care about the lives of the Syrian people? We need only to look to the death and destruction that U.S. wars and occupations have created in the Middle East and North Africa to see the reality of U.S. imperialism.

The Syrian people deserve a future full of peace and prosperity. The fate of the country needs to be decided by the Syrian people and their government not by the United States and its imperialist allies. As peace-loving people in Canada and around the world, we must unite our voices to demand:

US AND ALL IMPERIALISTS OUT OF SYRIA NOW!

*Follow Azza Rojbi on Twitter:
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The Criminal U.S. Blockade on Cuba & HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND!

By Tamara Hansen

For over 55 years the United States government has upheld its policy of blockade against the people and government of Cuba. Many people in Canada and the U.S. have been led to believe that this out-dated U.S. policy would slowly dissolve after the formal re-establishment of diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Cuba in 2015. However, this notion has been proven false time and time again.

A recent egregious example was explained in a June 9, 2017 press release written by Cuba's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. It explains that the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has charged the American Honda Finance Corporation with violating some aspects of the United States blockade on Cuba. Honda's supposed crime? A Honda subsidiary company in Canada leased 13 cars to the Cuban Embassy in Ottawa between February 2011 and March 2014. OFAC is slapping a fine against Honda which amounts to \$87,255. This example not only shows that the blockade is still in full force, but also how the blockade has an extra-territorial nature, as the business being conducted with Cuba was in Canada - which does not have a blockade on Cuba. However, OFAC has been able to reach across the border and obstruct the work of Cuban diplomats. This is also an intimidation tactic against businesses in Canada who may want to do business with both the United States and Cuba.

The press release further explains that since the December 17, 2014 announcements by U.S. President Obama and Cuban President Castro, the United States government has fined 11 entities under the regulations of the blockade. Of those fines, seven were against American and four were against foreign companies. The penalties have reached a value of \$2,842,429,064. Also important to note is that all but one of these were under the Obama administration, indeed the



On the 17th of the month, Cubans fly kites against the U.S. Blockade

case against Honda is the first of its kind under U.S. President Trump.

The international campaign to end the U.S. blockade on Cuba continues!

The U.S. blockade against Cuba, has been in place since the early 1960s. The U.S. government claims these sanctions are meant to punish the revolutionary government of Cuba, not the Cuban people. However, history has shown that these sanctions are hurting all of Cuban society: cutting access to medicines, schools supplies, construction materials, and the list goes on. There is also growing evidence that the blockade hurts the United States: imposing travel restrictions, international legal/financial penalties on companies, the sale of Cuban medicines to the United States, etc.

Since September 2015, the organization Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver (with the support of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, as well as other groups and individuals) has been organizing monthly picket actions, on the 17th of each month, in front of the U.S. Consulate to demand an end to the unjust blockade on Cuba. These dynamic monthly actions against

the U.S. blockade are also happening in two other cities in Canada: Ottawa and Montreal. However, as mentioned in the introduction, each month a passerby, or two, has asked the question 'but isn't the U.S. blockade on Cuba already over?'

There are many reasons we have continued our monthly campaigning in Vancouver and across Canada to put an end to this unjust U.S. policy. First, we continue because the people of Cuba have continued fighting, they have no choice, despite the nice words and rhetoric from Washington, the blockade continues to impact their everyday lives. Secondly, we know our duty as Cuba solidarity organizers is to build up pressure on the U.S. government to uphold its promises and put an end to the criminal U.S. blockade on Cuba. Finally, the need to continue pushing against the U.S. blockade was reaffirmed on June 16, 2017 when U.S. President Donald Trump announced several plans to setback the recent gains made in terms of Cuba-U.S. relations.

Trump's June 16th declaration against Cuba

On June 16, 2017, U.S. President Trump

was in Miami, Florida where he met with many right-wing Cubans, some of which have been involved in illegal terrorist actions against Cuba. In fact, last October during the U.S. election campaign the Bay of Pigs Veteran's association endorsed Trump for president. This is a group of veterans who illegally invaded Cuba with the support of the U.S. government in 1961. On June 16, Trump boasted, "now that I am your President, America will expose the crimes of the Castro regime

So while it is an attack on Cuba, and Trump is tightening the U.S. blockade on Cuba, this is not a full cancellation of Obama's policies towards Cuba, and much of Trump's drastic language was for show.

Cuba's response to Trump

Bruno Rodriguez, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Relations, called Trump's announcement and choice of venue in Miami, "a grotesque Cold War-era

dignity they are also willing to come to the table with the U.S., which is in the interest of working people in both countries.

#UnBlockCuba



#CubaVSBloqueo

What we need to do!

While Trump stopped short of some of the worst measures he could have reinstated against Cuba, his interest in pleasing the right-wing criminal



May 17, 2017 monthly picket action at the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver, Canada.



During his June 16, 2017 announcement on Cuba, U.S. President Donald Trump awkwardly kisses Martha Beatriz Roque, an anti-Cuba activist.

and stand with the Cuban people in their struggle for freedom. Because we know it is best for America to have freedom in our hemisphere, whether in Cuba or Venezuela, and to have a future where the people of each country can live out their own dreams." While ignoring U.S. hostility and crimes towards Cuba, Trump further declared that he was keeping his promises, stating, "effective immediately, I am canceling the last administration's completely one-sided deal with Cuba."

Despite how it sounds from this quote, Trump did not completely "cancel" all of the gains made under the Obama presidency. Even the mainstream media had to point out that he is leaving a fair number of Obama's policies in place including:

- Maintaining formal diplomatic relations with Cuba.
- Maintaining direct U.S.-Cuba commercial flights and cruise-ship travel.
- Maintaining the amount of Cuba's rum and cigars that individual Americans can bring home.

spectacle, made before a small audience, composed of old henchmen and thieves of the Batista dictatorship, mercenaries from the Playa Girón brigade, terrorists, demagogues and lackeys."

Rodriguez further explained, "It will not be a Presidential Directive of the United States that will thwart the sovereign course of Cuba, as they have been unable to do in more than 50 years of aggression, state terrorism, blockade, media war, and subversion. We have been through it all, and have run the risk. What could they threaten us with today that they haven't already, and failed? [...] The changes that may be necessary in Cuba will be independently decided by the Cuban people: only by the Cuban people, as they have always done. We will not ask anyone else for their opinion or permission." This strong response to Trump's declaration on June 16 send an important message to the world. Cuba will not forget the legacy of threats, intimidation and violence by the U.S. government towards Cuba. However, in maintaining their sovereignty and

elements in Miami, rather than listening to the Cuban people, their sovereign government and the world community is dangerous. We cannot be complacent and hope that the blockade on Cuba will just be swept, on its own, into the dustbin of history.

We need to continue coming together on the 17th of each month in front of the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver, as well as in cities across Canada and around the world. We need to create petitions, postcards, t-shirts, and other materials to raise awareness about this unjust U.S. policy. We need to come together on the streets, on social media and in other ways to raise our united voices in solidarity with the people of Cuba against the unjust and criminal U.S. blockade.

¡Cuba Si! ¡Bloqueo No!

Lift the Blockade on Cuba NOW!

*Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:
@THans01*

5 Reasons NOT to Celebrate CANADA'S 150TH BIRTHDAY

The fireworks and flags of the day obscure a far less talked about history...

This weekend, Canadians will take to the streets to march in parades, fire up barbecues, and don white and red to collectively venerate the idea of Canada as a liberal haven.

July 1, 2017 marks Canada's 150th-anniversary celebrations — where billions of dollars have been funneled into celebrating the founding of what is now called Canada on what is still in many parts of that country, Indigenous land.

During his time in office since October 2015, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, with a deeply unpopular predecessor, a storied last name, and a youthful countenance, has burnished his reputation as a progressive — and Canada as a country that is a bastion of progress, multiculturalism, and inclusion.

But what the vainglory of fireworks and flags of that day obscure, is an ongoing history of genocide against Indigenous people, imperialist wars and militarism, environmental destruction at home and abroad, decades of racist immigration policies, and a little-known history of slavery.

For Canada's 150th, teleSUR examines these five reasons why the day is not worth celebrating.

1 RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND GENOCIDE AGAINST INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Deemed as a method to rid Canada of its "Indian problem", the dark history of residential schools saw thousands of Indigenous children forcefully uprooted from their families in the 19th and 20th centuries.

As they were apprehended from their communities and placed in the boarding schools, often under the supervision of Catholic religious leaders, most were

starved, beaten, tortured, raped, and medically experimented on. Some schools saw upwards of 40 percent of Indigenous children never make it out alive.

"It was always against colonial and Canadian law to assault, rape, torture, starve, and murder children," writes Pamela D. Palmater, an Indigenous professor at Ryerson University.

With the last residential school having closed in the 1990s, its effects linger into today — with more Indigenous children in state care now than during the residential school era.

In 2016, the government's own Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) produced a report detailing an inquiry into the history of residential schools, concluding the state had engaged in a form of genocide.

According to Marxist author and academic from the Dene Nation, Glen Coulthard, while settler colonial violence in the past in Canada against its Indigenous population overall — who are called First Nations, Metis or Inuit — was enacted through more outright, brute force, today, they are suppressed mostly through negotiation and law.

On Indigenous reservations, essential services such as food, water, sanitation, housing, health, and education, are severely underfunded, leading to the premature deaths of Indigenous peoples in the country by 7-20 years. The population is disproportionately represented in prisons — at 10 times the national rate. And in the last few decades, there have been over 1,200 cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.



Protest for treaty rights



Residential Schools in Canada



Protest for 60s scoop families

2 DECADES OF SUPPORTING WARS

Since World War II, Canada has played a role in supporting NATO-led or U.S.-backed wars from Asia to Europe, to the Middle East.

Shortly after World War II, Canadian Forces were sent to support U.S.-led forces in Korea during the Korean War. Twenty-six thousand troops and 8 destroyers were sent, providing transport, supply and logistics support. The proxy war on the Asian peninsula, under the command of the United States, resulted



Protest against war and occupation

in ramped up hostilities against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which continues to be treated as a pariah state today by the Western bloc that fought it then.

Decades later, when NATO began Operation Allied Force on March 24, 1999, Canadian pilots flew combat missions for the first time since the Korean War, also sending its largest single overseas deployment since then.

The 78-day operation was the devastating U.S.-backed intervention in Yugoslavia, which saw 5,700 people killed, including 400 children. Nearly 7000 people were wounded, while 821 people remain missing from the operation.

The Canadian Armed Forces had extolled the intervention as the "liberation" of Kosovo.

Years later in Libya, in the regime-change operation that was disguised as a "people's revolution," NATO forces invaded Libya to overthrow its leader Muammar Gaddafi, which has since resulted in Libya becoming a hotbed of extremist violence, with reported instances of slavery as well. Canada participated in the mission by sending troops from the Royal Canadian Air Forces.

While in August 2011, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen claimed that the actions of the aviation forces in Libya caused no civilian casualties, the invasion killed more than 20,000 people and resulted in more than 350,000 people becoming refugees.

Canada has also played a massive role in the U.S.-led War on Terror, sending more than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members in its 12-year campaign in Afghanistan, as early as October 2001.

When the War on Terror was declared at the onset of the invasion of Iraq, NATO forces also joined, using forbidden weapons, such as white phosphorus, that

continue to devastate Iraqis today.

The war there has seen over 1 million Iraqis killed — the greatest loss in modern history.

In December 2016, it signed a record CDN \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia, dwarfing any other sale of arms ever made by the country. In fact, under Trudeau, Canada has become the second biggest arms exporter to the Middle East, second only to the United States, June figures by the IHS Jane's show.

Ottawa's own legal arguments admitted that the December sale of arms to the Saudis could be used against civilians in Yemen.

Still, government lawyers had said at that time, "Saudi Arabia is a key partner for Canada and an important ally in the region, plagued with instability, terrorism, and conflict ... Saudi Arabia is not a threat, but more so a key military ally."

3 ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION AT HOME & ABROAD, THROUGH PIPELINES AND MINING

Despite Trudeau's pledges to be "a leader against climate change", last fall, his government approved two major tar sand pipeline projects, to the ire of Indigenous communities and environmental activists alike.

In November, Trudeau announced the approval of the CDN\$6.8 billion Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, which

is set to carry highly toxic tar-sands oil almost 1 thousand miles to the west coast of the country, as well as the CDN\$7.5-billion Enbridge Line 3 project which is to set to carry tar-sands oil across four Canadian provinces and the state of Wisconsin to the shores of Lake Superior.

The projects, which are expected to lead to a combined increase in tar-sands oil production, have led to swift and furious reactions from those concerned about its consequences.

"Mark my words, Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project will never see the light of day," declared Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of the B.C. Indian Chiefs. "We do not accept the unscrupulous liability of dirty oil coming through any pipeline system to benefit some Texans or multinational interests at the expense of our inherent responsibilities to our grandchildren's grandchildren."

Abroad, most notably in Latin America, Canadian companies have a track record of egregious human rights violations and a dismal environmental record in its mining activities on the continent.

An October 2016 report by the Toronto-based Justice and Corporate Accountability Project at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School documented incidents in over a dozen countries by 28 Canadian mining giants, including big names like Barrick Gold, Goldcorp and Tahoe Resources. Many of these corporations have repeatedly garnered criticism for damning reports of human rights violations and environmental destruction at their mines.

The report found that the corporations were responsible for 44 deaths — 30 of which are described as clearly "targeted" — across 11 countries and 403 injuries — 363 of which happened during protests and other confrontations — across 13 different countries, between 2000 and 2015.



In addition, four United Nations bodies and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have all condemned the systematic abuses committed at the hands of Canadian companies.

In 2016, over 180 organizations from across Latin America penned a letter to Trudeau demanding the government act in the face of runaway abuses by Canadian mining companies.

Attempts to have the Canadian-based companies regulated by Ottawa to ensure human rights compliance have so far failed.

4 WWII INTERNMENT CAMPS, HEAD TAXES & RACIST IMMIGRATION POLICIES

From early in the country's founding, Canada implemented a number of racist laws against various ethnic groups that had migrated — or attempted to migrate there.

Between 1881 to 1885, 15,000 laborers were brought over from China to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Upon the project's completion, Canada enacted the Chinese Immigration Act (1885), which stipulated that a head tax was required for any Chinese person that wanted to immigrate to Canada — the first official policy in Canadian history to exclude immigration on the basis of ethnic origin.

Decades later, just before World War I began in 1914, a ship named the Komagatu Maru, carrying 376 passengers from Punjab, colonial British India, was turned away as it landed at a port in Vancouver. The passengers, comprised of 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus, all British subjects, were turned away based on immigration laws that were used to exclude immigrants of Asian origin.

Upon the ship's return to India, many were assaulted, some even killed by colonial British troops.

A few years later, during World War II, after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, and Canada's subsequent declaration of war on Japan, Canada interned hundreds of Japanese-Canadians.

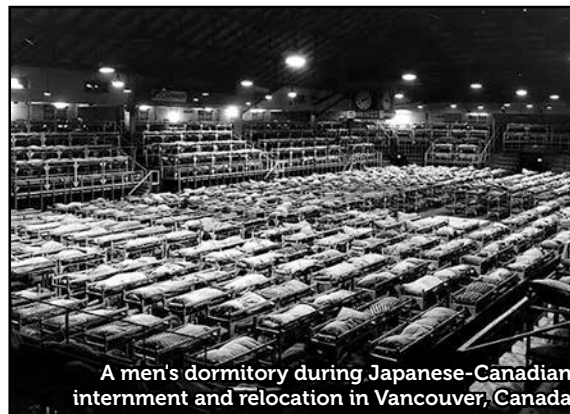
The community was forcibly removed, detained, and sent off to the interior of British Columbia, where they forced to labor in internment camps. They were also subjected to government-enforced

curfews and interrogations, job and property losses, and forced repatriation to Japan.

To this day, migrants to the country face daily instances of racism — that is, if they make it past its immigration system.

Last year, Trudeau's government imposed a cap on the number of private applications to sponsor Syrian and Iraqi refugees in 2017 to just 1,000.

In addition, Canada passed a law in 2004 that effectively bans anyone entering Canada via the United States from claiming refugee status at the border, called the Safe Third Country Agreement, a near-death sentence for those clamoring to escape Donald Trump's xenophobic policies.



A men's dormitory during Japanese-Canadian internment and relocation in Vancouver, Canada

5 THE HISTORY OF SLAVERY AND ANTI-BLACKNESS TODAY

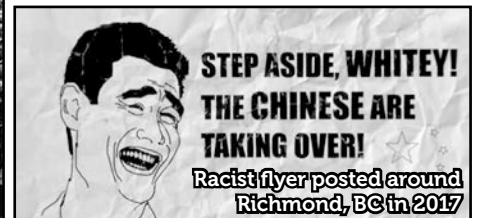
The history of slavery in Canada spanned two centuries in what was New France and Lower Canada under British rule. Black people were kept captive by people of all classes — from governors to priests, to blacksmiths, to tailors; and from figures such as Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, to James McGill, the founder of McGill University, one of Canada's top universities. Introduced by French colonial settlers in New France in the early 1600s, it lasted until it was abolished throughout British North America in 1834.

But while the formal system of enslavement ceased to exist in 1834, 183 years later, Black people remain monitored and marginalized by state institutions in Canada today.

While they make up only 3 percent of the population, they represent 10 percent of the people incarcerated in Canada.

As Anthony Morgan wrote in the Toronto Star, anti-Blackness in Canada today manifests in a myriad of other ways as well, including through restricted access to housing, the child welfare system, discrimination in employment opportunities and the resulting disproportionate levels of extreme poverty.

Reprinted from: www.telesurto.net



Organizers in Ontario with Black Lives Matter in Solidarity with Indigenous people in Attawapiskat

UNAC CONFERENCE A GREAT SUCCESS!

MAWO VANCOUVER ORGANIZERS JOIN 300 MORE FROM THE U.S. AND AROUND THE WORLD DURING CRUCIAL PERIOD FOR ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT



MAWO Vancouver Co-Chair Alison Bodine moderates a panel on expanding U.S. wars in Africa

By Alison Bodine

From June 16-18, 2017, Vancouver's antiwar coalition Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) joined in a successful antiwar conference organized by the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) under the banner "Stop the Wars at Home and Abroad: Building a Movement Against War, Injustice & Repression!" Throughout the dynamic weekend, over 300 people, from 31 US states and nine countries, gathered in Richmond, Virginia to discuss, debate and organize building a stronger and more united antiwar movement in the US and around the world. UNAC, which formed in 2010, is the largest and broadest antiwar coalition in the United States, and this conference was an important step forward towards building the fightback against US-led wars and occupations and the war against poor, working and oppressed people at home.

Through their participation, Alison Bodine, MAWO chairperson and Tamara Hansen, a founding member of MAWO, emphasized the urgency and necessity of building a united front against the imperialist wars at home and abroad, as well as the significance of organizing with the demands of "self-determination for all oppressed nations!" As the only organization at the conference representing Canada, one of the US's closest neighbours and allies, MAWO's representatives made an important intervention on the necessity

of building an antiwar movement across borders.

MAWO had a leading presence in all aspects of the conference, from working with the National Organizing Committee in the planning of the conference, to speaking as part of plenary panels and workshops.

During the opening session, Tamara Hansen gave greetings from MAWO alongside leading organizers from across the United States. The next morning, Alison co-chaired the first plenary session "Imperialist attacks on Africa and Asia," with Judith Bello from the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars (New York). The dynamic panel featured presentations from six antiwar organizers from the United States, focusing on escalating wars, occupations and threats against the people of Africa and Asia.

At the conference, MAWO also united with Veterans for Peace, a leading antiwar organization in the United States, to organize a workshop on building the antiwar movement. This workshop was a great success, and the unity between MAWO and Veterans for Peace is an example of the work that is necessary in building a more effective antiwar movement. During the final plenary, Tamara returned to give closing remarks during a plenary titled "Building a More Powerful Movement for Justice and Peace." Tamara spoke on the urgent topic of "The New Era of War and Occupation and the working class perspective for

peace," drawing on the over 13 years of MAWO's organizing to put forward a summary of the importance of building a creative, consistent and coordinated antiwar movement that was echoed by other panelists.

At the end of the UNAC Conference 2017 participants unanimously passed a resolution outlining the perspective for future actions and organizing. The "2017 Conference Action Plan" begins "UNAC reaffirms its commitment to the organization of independent, mass action, united front mobilizations against all U.S. wars at home and abroad. Unity in action against the endless imperialist wars for power and profit is inseparable from the same necessary unity at home against the inherent racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-working policies generated by a society ruled by the one percent. To this end, UNAC will seek the collaboration of all organizations challenging oppression in all its manifestations with the objective of planning regional and/or national mobilizations to bring the power of the people into the streets. UNAC is committed to providing a platform for unity and dynamic collaboration in a broad-based struggle against imperialism in all its domestic and international expressions."

As Alison and Tamara expressed at the Conference, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) sees the program and perspective of UNAC as our own and is committed to continuing to work together to build a united front against war and occupation!

UNAC REPORT ON 2017 CONFERENCE

STOP THE WARS AT HOME AND ABROAD!

As activists met in Richmond, VA for the UNAC conference entitled “Stop the Wars at Home and Abroad: Building a Movement Against War, Injustice & Repression,” the US military was shooting down another Syrian plane from the skies over Syria, and the cop who murdered Philando Castile was being acquitted. Despite these realities, the conference and the movement took a huge step forward, as over 300 people registered for the conference, bringing together people from 31 states as well as nine foreign countries: Canada, Columbia, Hungary, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine and Venezuela. The conference was the most diverse by age, race and geography of any antiwar conference or meeting in recent history.

Hosted in Richmond by the UNAC-affiliated Virginia Defenders for Freedom, Justice and Equality, the Friday night through Sunday conference presented a number of panels and workshops on the wars abroad and the wars at home on people of color, workers, immigrants, Muslims and others. The entire conference was professionally live-streamed and recorded by Other Voices, Other Choices, with producer Wilton Vought. The recordings can be seen and heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLatnOpu3eZimt5YieDM5MFzDPGe0ZQgzl>.

This was the first time that UNAC attempted a conference in the South and away from the major East Coast metropolitan areas. This was due to the number of groups from the South that have recently joined UNAC and an increased pace of struggle in that area of the country.

Speakers at the conference recognized that we are at an extremely dangerous time with current expanding, unending wars, millions of displaced refugees, more than 800 foreign U.S. military bases, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and climate destruction. At the same time, at home, the social safety net is being ravaged, repression of dissent is rising, mass incarceration accelerates, wages and standard of living stagnates and the obscenely wealthy are raking it in. Now, more than ever, we need a strong unified coalition of antiwar and justice movements to fight-back against the imperialist war system and



win!

A number of panels and workshops were held at the conference, which included speakers from UNAC affiliated groups and friends. Each panel focused on international or domestic issues, but all contained speakers who addressed both to draw the connection between the wars abroad and the wars at home.

Two sessions of workshops were also held and included topics on NATO expansion, building the antiwar movement, drone warfare, environmental justice, the “color revolutions,” the peace process in Columbia, youth activism, the Black Alliance for Peace and more.

The final panel of the weekend, held on Sunday morning, was called “Building a More Powerful Movement for Justice and Peace.” The panel can be seen and heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vyvAkBLPMI&index=10&list=PLatnOpu3eZimt5YieDM5MFzDPGe0ZQgzl>. On this panel, leaders of several organizations with different experiences brought their ideas to the conference in the hope of building a stronger movement. This panel was followed by the presentation of an action proposal and an open mic to discuss the proposal and how we could best move forward. Based on the discussion, the unanimously adopted proposal was modified. The final version can be found here: <http://nepajac.org/actionproposal2017.htm>.

The action proposal started with a reaffirmation of the founding principles of UNAC: “UNAC reaffirms its commitment to the organization of independent, mass action, united front mobilizations against all U.S. wars at home and abroad. Unity in action against the endless imperialist wars for power and profit is inseparable from the

same necessary unity at home against the inherent racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-working class policies generated by a society ruled by the one percent.” The proposal went on to assert that UNAC will organize and support actions along these lines and will expand our leadership bodies to broaden and strengthen our coalition.

The conference concluded with a march from the Richmond Conference Center to Richmond’s African Burial Ground in Shockoe Bottom, once the epicenter of the US domestic slave trade, where we declared our support for the ongoing struggle to reclaim, expand and properly memorialize that site.

This [Shockoe Bottom] was the first and only... burial ground where Black people were permitted to be buried in the city of Richmond... Gabriel, who along with hundreds of others, attempted to lead a rebellion on August 30 of 1800 and gave his life on the gallows on this spot... Gabriel's son and every generation of that family appointed a historian to carry that story forward. - Ana Edwards, Chair, Defenders' Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project.

The conference represented the rapidly changing consciousness of the people of the US. It represented the coming together of the antiwar movement with a significant section of Black leaders and international guests who have a clear understand of what is needed for our movement today and how all the issues discussed are interconnected. There was a consensus that the wars abroad and at home stem from the same source – the integrated corporate, financial, military, political machine at the top. The importance of having a broad coalition and building UNAC was stressed by speakers and attendees throughout the conference. Given the state of the US and the world today, it is essential that we build on this conference by strengthening our movements and our collaborative efforts. We urge all to go to the UNAC web site (<http://UNACpeace.org>) to join our email list and have your organizations join our coalition.

End the Wars at Home and Abroad!

This is an excerpt, for the full article please visit: www.unacpeace.org

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT & THE UNITED FRONT

PRESENTATION BY A FOUNDING MEMBER OF MAWO, TAMARA HANSEN AT UNAC'S 2017 CONFERENCE

Speech delivered by Tamara Hansen at the Closing Plenary of the United National Antiwar Coalition's (UNAC) Conference in Richmond, Virginia, June 18, 2017, with some edits made for clarity.

Good morning everyone, what an amazing weekend we have had so far!

I want to thank the United National Antiwar Coalition for organizing a great conference this weekend. It has been an honour to join united with all of you to learn from each other, to come up with ways we can work together and I hope that we will continue after today to support each other's initiatives and build a more unified and powerful antiwar movement, in the U.S., Canada, and ultimately, around the world.

Again, my name again is Tamara Hansen, I am a founding organizer with Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) in Vancouver, Canada. I am also on the editorial board of the Fire This Time Newspaper.

For us, the world today is defined by ongoing and expanding US-led wars and occupations. U.S. sanctions, bombings, invasions, and covert military actions are the reality of life for the majority of people on this planet. As I mentioned on Friday, in MAWO we call this the New Era of War and Occupation.

As activists, organizers and human-loving people, gathered here at this conference, we need to confront this vicious campaign by U.S. imperialism and its allies. From their 2001 war on Afghanistan, to their 2003 war on Iraq, we have witnessed over 15 years of brutal wars and occupations around the globe. This, of course, has included the war at home in the form of racist and islamophobic attacks, austerity measures, and attacks on our civil & democratic rights.

What I want to discuss this morning are the political dynamics between oppressed and oppressor; or the relationship of forces within our tasks and perspectives to confront this new era of war and occupation.

Of course in 8 minutes, I can only do so much, but at least I will put forward a few of our ideas and what we are working on in Vancouver Canada, as well as, how we can work together in the future across borders to

put an end to war.

Indeed, I think we have all done a superb job this weekend to bring together many good ideas and analysis based on our own experiences and outlooks, and this makes my presentation much easier.

One of the great aspects of the UNAC conference has been combining the discussions of the war at home and the war

war at home and the wars abroad. It could be compared to the two blades of a pair of scissors, which are coming together. Meaning that this intensification of imperialist war and occupation has made the struggle of oppressed people here in the United States (and also in Canada), and oppressed people around the world come together. This calls for more united action and more unity in our struggles.

Today more than ever before in history, the concept of unity is needed to develop a correct vision and perspective. While our struggle is responding to attacks by the ruling class at home, the scope of our struggle is becoming increasingly international, towards building a strong, effective international movement against war and occupation and for self-determination of all oppressed nations at home and abroad.

But our struggle is not just political in nature, it is absolutely economic as well. Fighting for the rights of workers and oppressed people and fighting against war and

occupation, puts the masses abroad in a better position against their ruling classes and U.S. imperialism. Can you imagine if workers in Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Namibia, China, India, Morocco, Congo, Guatemala, and Columbia, just to name a few, were all being paid justly and fairly, or closely to what workers earn in the United States or Canada? Can you imagine how much life would change here in the United States, how much life would change for people in imperialist countries? It immediately opens the struggle of working and oppressed people, so within this simple question, we are reminded that the world capitalist set up, as it stands, cannot bring the living standards of the west to third world countries, because the system would collapse. This reminds us of how our struggles are connected by way of war, occupation and economy. The class struggle in the world today is more connected than ever before, and it has opened a great opportunity for us to mobilize, rearrange and coordinate against imperialism and capitalism. We need to move from this new sense of unity towards creating that in action and organization, which means building united fronts.

It is time for us to work together to tackle

continued on page 18



abroad. Nevertheless, for us the context is our specific historical circumstance, this new era of war and occupation. This will be a long epoch, in which imperialists are seeking very direct, brutal, bloody military confrontations. One of our brothers yesterday described the militarization of the police, and we could also talk about this new era of war and occupation as being: militarization at home and militarization abroad.

But it is no longer possible to separate these two from each other, while our struggle against the war at home is directed and targeted at the ruling capitalist class here, the struggle against wars and occupations abroad is also directed and targeted at the same ruling capitalist class at home. The difference is that, as we said ten years ago, this is a long historic period in which imperialists will shed the blood of millions of people (and we have already seen this over the past 15 years), in which they hope to bring some partial solution to their deep capitalist economic crisis, over production, and their battle amongst themselves for who will dominate the market.

Speaking for today, we see a convergence of these two struggles, rather than a divergence, which is caused by the intensification of the

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

PRESENTATION BY MAWO CHAIR ALISON BODINE AT UNAC'S 2017 CONFERENCE

I would say when I look around that the world today is actually defined by ongoing and expanding US-led wars and occupations. US sanctions, bombings, invasions, covert military actions are the reality of life for the majority of people on this planet, and that includes people in the US and Canada, except they do not realize it.

In Mobilization Against War and Occupation in Vancouver, Canada we call this period the new era of war and occupation and see it as beginning in 2001 with the war and occupation of Afghanistan, which is of course today, now the longest war in US history and Trump is sending more troops.

Then there is:

- The 2003 invasion of Iraq, the United States use of chemical weapons and white phosphorus today in that country;
- Libya, as we have discussed today, completely destroyed, turned into a failed state, which I think is an example of what the US in trying to create across the Middle East and North Africa. No longer are they satisfied with just a puppet government, they would rather see the country in complete and utter chaos and destruction.
- Syria is also beginning to be another example of this, though the Syrian government is standing very strong against the full might of US imperialism. We have six years of a US fomented civil war that has resulted in more than 400,000 people killed and nearly half of the country's population has had to flee their homes.
- In Yemen, there has been a two-year bombing campaign that has been backed by the United States that has resulted in 12,000 civilian deaths, and starvation as we heard this morning.
- Then there is US aggressions in Latin America, especially with sanctions, threats and covert operations in Venezuela, a US-backed coup in Ukraine, interventions throughout Africa and the build-up of NATO forces in Eastern Europe on the border with Russia.

The refugee crisis I think is the clearest



example of fact that this new era of war and occupation is not ending. 65.3 million people would not flee homes, risk their lives in the Mediterranean or to cross the Sahara desert, or even the dangerous journey through Latin America, if they had any hope that their situation was going to change. People in Syria fled Syria because they do not see an end to the war that had been imposed on them by the United States.

Now, there is Trump, which of course we could talk about him forever. However, I think that it has been significant that Trump has not been a focus of this conference. That we see, as people that are organizing with UNAC and its allies around the world, that Trump is only a continuation of a policy of wars and occupations. That he is not somehow changing US foreign policy. His words are inline with US foreign policy, whether it is the racism or the build-up towards more wars and occupations.

On May 19, we have US President Trump on his first international trip, telling us everything about his plans for more wars and occupations through where he chose to visit, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Europe, all countries that will help him in his further wars. The reality is that Trump didn't go to these countries because he is concerned about the well being of people in the Middle East and Africa, he did it to seal a \$110 billion weapons deal with Saudi Arabia and also to get them on board for the continuing wars and occupations of the US.

Then, there is also the expanding US military

budget.

This is all related to the war at home, another theme of this conference. We have heard from many speakers making the connection between the war at home and abroad, but I think that sometimes there are things that we miss and that I do want to emphasize.

I want to say that racism and Islamophobia, which I know is a campaign by Vets for Peace that we have been inspired from in Vancouver, is not isolated from the wars abroad, they are fundamentally linked. And I don't mean just to say that the US government practices racism both at home and abroad, but they need to use racism and Islamophobia at home in order to successfully carry out their wars and occupations in the Middle East and Africa. They need to convince people in the United States that it's okay to kill millions of people that don't look like them because there are different. They need to convince people here in the United States not to unite and rise up in defense of Black communities, because that's how their economic system operates and that's how they continue their wars and exploitation abroad.

At home, when it comes to the Black nation or to Indigenous nations here in the United States, or equally in Canada, or abroad when we talk about the countries that they are invading and occupying and exploiting. They are attacking countries both abroad; and also at the same time imposing the same destruction and poverty here at home. It's the same battle

as Dr. Martin Luther King said 50 years ago. Unfortunately, this is the reality that we face, but this is a very important time we are living in.

Now, we are all here because we are interested in building a stronger and more effective antiwar movement, and I will add to that, across borders, because as I said I think is important. We are here because of this, but I think we need to talk more about what it means. To me it means that we need urgent and serious political and organizational preparation for these continued wars.

They are constantly campaigning for their wars, and we therefore have to constantly campaign; to the best of our abilities and our capacities, but that cannot be a few days a year activity. Endless war calls for a consistent, creative and coordinated antiwar movement and also an unwavering and clear antiwar message.

In Mobilization Against War and Occupation we have been attempting working towards this for the last 14 years, and building, but we have a lot to learn and a lot more to do towards working with other groups.

We need to make sure that our antiwar positions make sense and do not waver because we cannot afford to be confusing to people. I know that what's what many of you here face with the Democratic party constantly, through of it's machinations and organizations. We have similar organizations in Canada, telling us for example, that Canada is a peace-keeping country. It is big thing to fight against, but I do think that we can fight against it, like I said, be campaigning on self-determination for oppressed nations, by really linking the connection between war at home and war abroad and challenging the austerity budgets and war expenditure more then we do.

Part of what else we need to is work more and connect with movements that are growing in the US and Canada, we have to keep

focusing, though, on the antiwar campaign. What I mean is that when we go to Black Lives Matter demonstrations, or when we go to Standing Rock, or we join the Occupy movement, we have to go to them with an antiwar message. We cannot just fully immerse ourselves in the politics of the war at home, we have to maintain our solidarity with the people of Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan. We have to really get people on our side for an anti-imperialist movement against war and occupation abroad. Of course, we need to do this through the connection to the war at home, but we cannot stop campaigning against wars and occupations abroad.

There is also more analysis to be done of the 2002-2003 time. That is, as I said, when I got involved and it is also when we had in Vancouver, Canada 40,000 people marching on the streets, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, I think there were 20,000, there were millions in other places. There are still very important lessons to be gained from that kind of mass mobilization which is still the largest mobilization for peace that the planet has ever seen. It is not that long ago, and there are lots of people like me, for whom it was probably one of their first demonstrations. It is time to remind people of that.

We need to address what has been a lack of consistency and continuity of antiwar campaigning. It cannot be a fashionable or "en mode" thing, or a casual approach. Unfortunately, we are fighting against a gigantic machine, and we have to have consistency.

In Mobilization Against War and Occupation we organize a monthly demonstration where we engage with people, we test our politics



is one thing that the culture that has been imposed in the US and Canada is, besides racist, misogynist and bigoted in every way, it is anti-politics. People are told politics isn't your issue, you are not going to change anything; so we have to fight against that and constantly campaign.

MAWO also does our work through newsletters and other literature. There are some examples out here on the chairs, that I will also pass around. We also regularly issue statement and press releases. I want to encourage everyone here, for every action that you organize to try and send a press release. It is grueling to have to contact mainstream media and never hear back, but sometimes you do and that is significant.

We had a Hands Off Syria rally in Vancouver after the US government directly bombed Syria in April and the mainstream media came out that time. They filmed us and aired 15 seconds, and in that 15 seconds people saw signs that said "Hands Off Syria" and it went to tens of thousands of people that would not have seen it otherwise. These are numbers that we cannot really match. Be it good or bad, they will use your words how they will, but at least we are planting the seed of critical thinking with people that watch it.

MAWO has also tried to adapt a creative approach, and work with different communities. Working with the Muslim community on certain events, working with different oppressed communities on other events, and always opening space for them in our organizing. We are starting up forums with poetry readings and cultural expression, to try and politicize the artistic community, which is struggling to survive, but we need to bring politics to them, and introduce them to antiwar politics.

In Vancouver, MAWO has organized a Hip-Hop Festival 4 Peace nine times, a Film Festival for Peace also for nine consecutive years, and these events are critically important to our work.

I also want to emphasize that unity is also important. UNAC is smaller, most organizations are smaller than they used to be a few years ago, let alone in the 1970's. The



and we ask people to sign petitions, not because we think that petitions alone, even in the thousands will change the policy of the Canadian or US government, but because we need to have those conversations. We need to politicize people against war. If there

world is a different place, people are involved in different things but I have to say that being here in Virginia, although it is my first time still feels different than it did a few years ago, being back in the US, and I know that you all have been experiencing it, but things are rumbling and building in ways that we haven't seen in a long time and we have to take advantage of that in the antiwar movement. As I said, I believe that war is the most critical issue and is what defines the world that we live in today.

There is other important work, like reaching out to the labour movement, it is difficult but critical work.

I think that when it comes to unity, UNAC is a good example of this, a great example of this. We have to do more to connect across borders. One of our jobs here at the conference is to trade information, to get to know each other, and to commit to staying contact through all of our work, as well as committing to united actions, which is why I think that the discussion tomorrow is so important.

We need to build a united front against wars and occupations across borders, and we in Vancouver are ready to work with everyone here at the UNAC conference to do this; to building international and national cooperation and coordination. This means international days of action, conferences like this, things that take resources and energy but are critically important to the world today. As progressive, antiwar and human loving people, I think that we need to stop forward and unite to resist and fightback against this new criminal and bloody war drive by the US government and their puppet governments and allies, we need to have a clear and unwavering antiwar position, and we need to organize consistently, and not on an occasional basis, and we always need to be working to unite different groups locally, nationally, and importantly internationally. This workshop between Mobilization Against War and Occupation and Veterans for Peace, is one good example which can turn into long-term collaboration in our work together.

Let's do this. Let's build a united front against wars and occupations.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
@Alisoncolette*



Los Angeles



Sana'a, Yemen



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the daily struggles of people in the United States, Canada, and around the world. Connecting to issues that folks can connect with, whether it's the environment, racism or anti-austerity measures; to war and occupation. And this has been an important concept discussed at this conference.

In Vancouver, for the last 10 years, every month we have been organizing rallies, petition campaigns, forums, conference, and festivals in order to bring these struggles to people in our city. To raise the issue of war and occupation in their daily lives, and all of these actions are a part of keeping the fire alive, within our anti-war organizers, but also bringing these ideas to

new communities.

In Vancouver, to do this we talk about the three Cs – Consistency, Creativity and Coordination. These three Cs are things that we hope everyone in the antiwar movement will embrace, as a sort of mantra, for moving ahead. How can we be more consistent? The ruling class is consistent in its campaign for more war and occupation, we have to be consistent too. How can we be creative in our message and bring it to working and oppressed people? How can we further coordinate our work, or be more united? More international days of action, more unity in the antiwar movement.

Coming together in a united front is the best way to unite and win. Because it puts us in a position not only to have a clear

view and strategy to organize our struggles, but also brings strength to building a combat organization. And organization is the essence and foundation of any struggle's ability to win. We can learn from the example of yesterday, from the message from our sister in Poland, about their struggle for abortion rights. How women came together, in a united front, against their ruling class and its measures against the right to abortion. It is with these united fronts that we can go forward to establish a better world. I believe that this is our fight to win, we just have to come together and make it happen.

United we will win! ¡Venceremos!

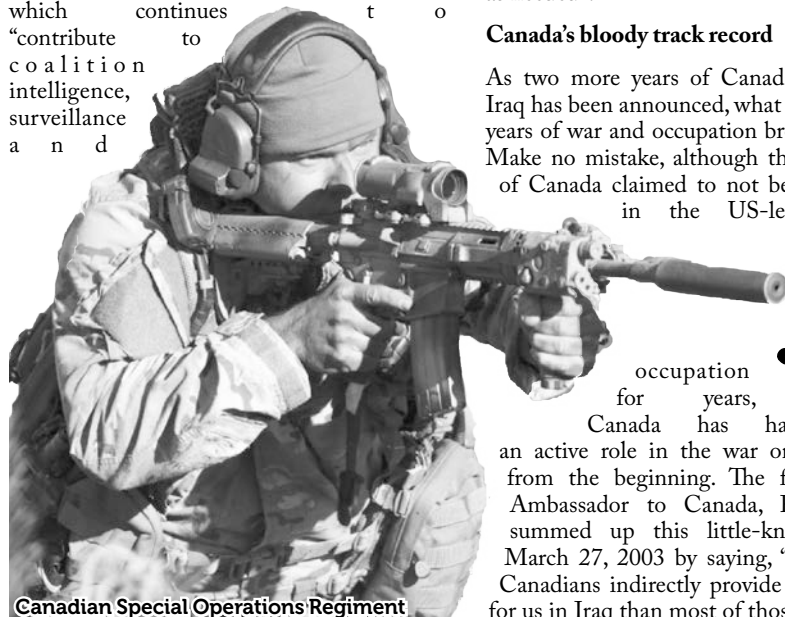
*Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:
@THans01*

By Janine Solanki

“What happened there is, first of all, something to be celebrated for the excellence of the Canadian Forces in their training, in the performance of their duties.” This celebration which Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was speaking of on July 27th, 2017 was a sniper shot taken by a Canadian soldier in Iraq earlier in June, which killed a Daesh (also known as ISIS) fighter. Firstly, Trudeau quickly came under fire for the callous glorifying of the death of another human being which, no matter who it is, by the standards of common decency is not a matter of celebration. This aside, the sniper kill shot brought into question, just how “non-combat” is Canada’s role in Iraq? After all, the Trudeau government claims that the Canadian military is in Iraq on an “advise and assist” mandate and is “non-combat”. One must ask, would we have even heard about Canadian snipers if not for the fact that this particular sniper shot broke a world record for killing someone at a distance by the barrel of a gun, thereby giving the government of Canada bragging rights?

What has Canada been doing in Iraq anyways?

Canada’s “Operation IMPACT” began on September 4th, 2014, with the stated aim of fighting Daesh. Justin Trudeau ran his 2015 election campaign with the promise to end Canada’s combat mission in Iraq, specifically to pull out the six CF-18 Hornet fighter jets from Iraq. While Trudeau removed the fighter jets and declared the combat mission over, his “advise and assist” mission just looks like a new name for combat. Trudeau tripled the number of Special Forces military trainers in Iraq to 210, has deployed four CH-146 Griffon helicopters, an aerial refueller which continues to provide fuel to other coalition aircraft, and a surveillance aircraft which continues to contribute to coalition intelligence, surveillance and



Canadian Special Operations Regiment

reconnaissance capabilities”. So, although Canadian fighter jets may not be dropping the bombs, Canada is doing the behind-the-scenes work to enable the fighter jets of other countries to drop their bombs!

Under the Trudeau government, the rules of engagement were also defined to allow Canadian troops to fire first on Daesh fighters, if they detect hostile intent, to protect themselves, civilians or Iraqi forces. Considering that by the Canadian Armed Forces statistics, about 20% of training missions take place close to or directly at the front lines, you can imagine Canadian soldiers are in combat situations fairly regularly!

Canada in Iraq – Extended and Expanded

On Thursday June 29, the Government of Canada announced that it is extending military operations in Iraq for two more years, to March 31, 2019. This decision was taken after Parliament had adjourned for the summer, meaning there was no vote or debate in the House of Commons for this extension. Of course, taxpayers who are footing the \$371.4 million bill for this extension definitely had no say in this decision!

Although this extended military intervention in Iraq is still claimed to be non-combat, the Government of Canada has expanded the troop deployment to 850 Canadian Armed Forces members, and how they will be deployed is not yet disclosed. In addition to the helicopters and surveillance and refueling aircraft already in Iraq, Canada is adding a C-130J Hercules aircraft and is expanding the authority of Canadian troops to “assist new partners within the Iraqi security forces” beyond previously mainly Kurdish forces in Northern Iraq. Canada’s Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan left open the possibility of ramping up Canada’s intervention in Iraq, by saying the military would “deploy capabilities as needed”.

Canada’s bloody track record

As two more years of Canada’s military in Iraq has been announced, what has the last 14 years of war and occupation brought to Iraq? Make no mistake, although the government of Canada claimed to not be participating in the US-led war and

occupation for years, Canada has had an active role in the war on Iraq from the beginning. The former US Ambassador to Canada, Paul Cellucci, summed up this little-known fact on March 27, 2003 by saying, “Ironically, the Canadians indirectly provide more support for us in Iraq than most of those 46 countries



Canadian Joint Task Force troops in Iraq



Canadian Special Forces in Iraq



Airstrikes on Mosul, Iraq

that are fully supporting us.” Canada’s longstanding hidden role in Iraq included the Canadian Navy, surveillance and transport aircraft, military planners and other quiet means of supporting a war. Even Canadian Brigadier General Walter Natynczyk (former Canadian Chief of Defence Staff) was deputy chief of policy, strategy and planning in Iraq, with 35,000 US, British and Australian troops under his command in 2004.

It is not only the last 14 years of war in Iraq we have to look at to see what increased war and occupation will bring. Canada has a dismal track record in Afghanistan, where the Canadian military played a large role for 13 years, at times with the third highest number of troops deployed after the US and Britain. The Canadian military commanded regional operations for NATO’s ISAF force in Afghanistan, as well as from February to August 2004 held

CANADA IN IRAQ: Two More Years of War and Occupation

command of the entire NATO I S A F

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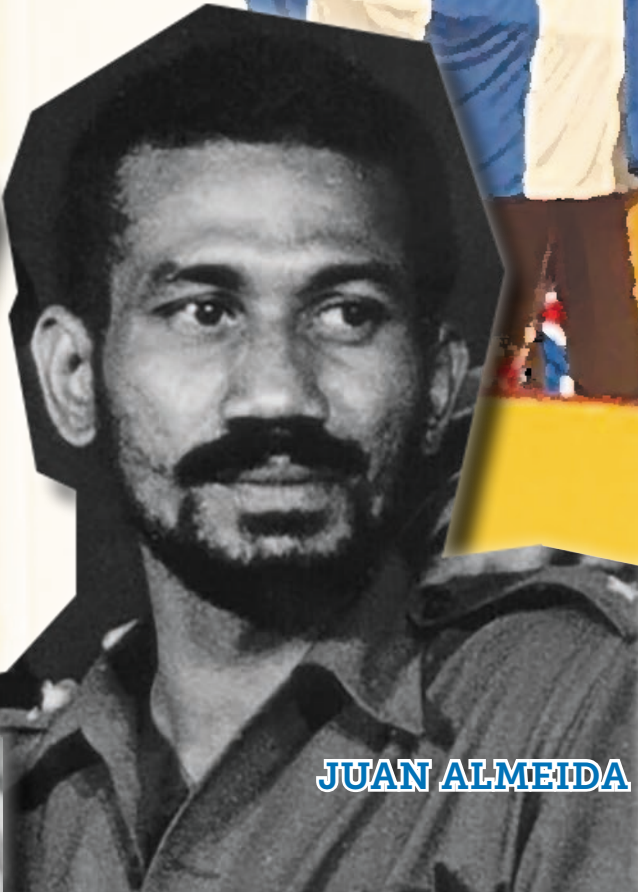
CELEBRATE CUBA'S
JULY 26th
MOVEMENT
& THE GAINS OF
CUBA'S SOCIALIST
REVOLUTION



RAÚL CASTRO



FIDEL CASTRO



JUAN ALMEIDA



MELBA HERNÁNDEZ



HAYDÉE SANTAMARÍA



Why Poor & Working People must Defend Venezuela & the Bolivarian Revolution

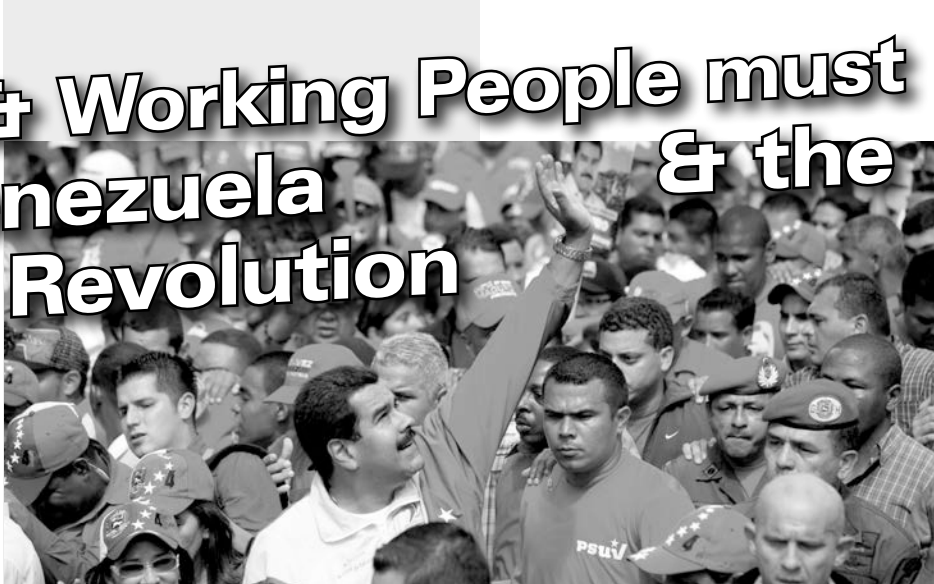
By Alison Bodine

Over the last two months over 90 people have been killed in Venezuela, and over 1200 people have been injured as a result of a destructive destabilization campaign by Venezuela's violent opposition. These pro-US mercenaries have committed murder, arson, and theft, among other dangerous crimes and terrorist actions all with the objective of overthrowing the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro and reversing the gains of the Bolivarian revolution.

In the face of these increasing attacks by Venezuela's counter-revolutionary opposition, who works together with the US government, President Nicolas Maduro has called for a National Constituent Assembly to strengthen the Bolivarian revolution and constitution. On July 30, 2017 people in Venezuela will go the polls to elect this National Constituent Assembly. The 545 elected members of the National Assembly will then get to work in strengthening Venezuela's Constitution, which was originally passed in 1999 and has been a cornerstone of the Bolivarian Revolution.

Venezuela's capitalist class, which still hold the majority of the means of production and distribution in Venezuela, does not want this election, and the re-writing of the Constitution to happen. Not only are they boycotting the National Constituent Assembly elections, they are also inciting increasing violence in the streets of Venezuela and sabotage against the economy meant to scare away people from participating in the elections as well.

This increased campaign of terror has also come hand-in-hand with escalating attacks by the US government and their imperialist allies. Since March of 2015, President Obama, and now President Trump, have held in place an executive order that declares Venezuela a so-called "extraordinary threat" to US national security. This order has enabled increasing sanctions and economic sabotage against Venezuela at a time when Venezuela's economy was already suffering due to the



massive drop in the price of oil. Recently, US President Trump has not only increased the sanctions against Venezuela, but is also appealing to other countries, especially in the European Union, to join in.

US imperialism and their allies like the government of Canada, has also attempted to undermine Venezuela's sovereignty and self-determination through a campaign to get the Organization of American States (OAS) to intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela. This is no surprise, given that the OAS, a regional diplomatic body, receives the majority of its funding from the United States and is head-quartered in Washington, DC. This pro-imperialist intervention campaign in the OAS, as well as an attempt by the US government to condemn Venezuela in the United Nations Security Council, have both failed.

People and governments around the world are standing with President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution in defense of the sovereignty and self-determination of an independent government. They are also standing with Venezuela because the Bolivarian revolutionary process, under the leadership of Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro has also made great gains for poor and oppressed people around the world through international solidarity.

As one example of this, in July, Venezuela is celebrating the 12th anniversary of Petrocaribe, and organization set-up by the government of Venezuela to provide affordable oil to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, not necessary in exchange for money, but instead in exchange for goods and services. The government of Venezuela has also joined with revolutionary Cuba in the creation of ALBA (the Bolivarian Alternative

for the Americas) and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations), organizations that provide an alternative to US-sponsored alliances and funded free-trade agreements that have impoverished and plundered countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

In main stream capitalist media today, including here in Canada, there is never a mention about the violence in Venezuela carried out by the murderous thugs and mercenaries of the pro-US opposition in Venezuela, nor an coverage of the great gains that have been made by poor, working and oppressed people within the Bolivarian Revolutionary process. No discussion about the elimination of illiteracy in the country, or the fact that even in the face of violence and economic sabotage the revolutionary government has provided over 1.5 million homes to marginalized people in Venezuela over the past six years.

As peace-loving people in Canada, we have the responsibility to understand what is really happening in Venezuela today, and to take action against US and imperialist attacks on the government of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolution. An attack against Venezuela is an attack against poor, working and oppressed people around the world. A victory for the people of Venezuela against the violent opposition and counter-revolutionary mercenaries is a victory for all of us.

The following articles and analysis contain the tools that we need to order to defend the democratically elected government of President Maduro and the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
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What Is Really Happening



*By Alberto Lovera**

Since early April this year, Venezuelans have been suffering the consequences of violent street protests, resulting in more than 60 deaths, hundreds more injured and millions of dollars in value in the destruction of public and private property. We are deeply sorry for the death of so many people, both civilians and law enforcement agents. Media reporting on this situation, however, has been strongly biased, with news outlets falsely depicting Venezuela as a country in state of economic collapse and at war, where peaceful protesters are violently repressed by a dictatorial government. Here are the facts:

1) PROTESTS ARE NOT PEACEFUL:

Protesters marching against the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro are very often far from peaceful and come equipped with home-made weapons, Molotov cocktails, bazookas, ammunitions, explosives, stones as well as firearms, which they use against the forces of law and order. Opposition demonstrators have set government buildings on fire, vandalized and destroyed public and private property, looted and burned hundreds of small shops and have even perpetrated attacks against two maternity hospitals which they tried to set on

fire. In the case of the Hugo Chavez Maternity Hospital, the three-hour attack by opposition armed thugs gravely endangered the lives of 54 babies, mothers in labour, nurses, doctors and patients all of who had to be evacuated. A few weeks ago some of the most violent opposition demonstrators started to throw human and animal excrements at the forces of law and order. There is no need to mention the danger of all kinds of diseases erupting in a tropical climate with streets full of excrements and in a delicate health situation due to the increased appearance of the Zika virus. Only a few weeks ago Venezuelan opposition supporters attacked Venezuela's Diplomatic Mission in Spain, asking publicly on social media for Venezuelan ambassadors to end up like the former Russian Ambassador in Turkey, Andrei Karlov, who was assassinated in Ankara last year. In fact, also a few weeks ago, our Consulate in the Caribbean island of Bonaire was attacked by sympathizers of the Venezuelan opposition who unlawfully entered the premises of the diplomatic mission and vandalized equipment and materials, in clear violation of international law. Unfortunately, similar incidents have also taken place in many other Venezuelan diplomatic missions worldwide. Worse still, opposition armed thugs have thus far set two people on fire, one of whom, Orlando Figueroa (22) was brutally beaten, doused with gasoline and then set

on fire, he suffered 80% burning of his body and died on June 5. Disgracefully there has been scant reporting in the mainstream media (MSM) on the hundreds of instances of highly visible opposition horrific violence and wanton destruction despite the fact that world media outlets have hundreds of correspondents and journalistic teams based in Venezuela itself. And most MSM reporting on violence is falsely attributed to government repression. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that MSM avoids telling the truth about opposition violence and destruction because it contradicts their false narrative that the protests are about 'beleaguered democrats' fighting against an increasingly 'authoritarian government'.

2) NO POLITICAL PRISONERS:

In Venezuela people have been arrested because they have committed criminal acts, causing violence in the streets leading to the death of dozens of people and putting many lives at risk, not because of their political position. This is the case in most countries. In the United States, the U.S. Code (Title 18 Crimes and Criminal Procedure) punishes any person participating in any action construed as rioting carries the penalty of 5 years in prison (Ch. 102), and any action construed as sedition to bring about "regime change", that is advocating overthrow of the government



(Ch.115) carries the penalty of 20 years in prison. If to these crimes we add the list of offences committed by the opposition armed thugs since the current wave of violence began in April 2017 and about which there is irrefutable evidence, period in which they committed crimes such as arson (Ch.5), assault Ch.7), civil disorder (Ch.12), importation, manufacture, distribution and storage of explosive material (Ch.40), illegal importation, distribution and use of firearms (Ch.44), terrorism defined as violent acts intended to intimidate or coerce the civilian population (Ch.113B), carry penalties from 5 to 20 years in prison. Since the armed thugs deployed by the opposition have perpetrated all the crimes listed above, had they carried them out in U.S. territory and had they been applied US legislation (Chapters in brackets) they would be facing prison sentences ranging from 5 years to several decades in prison.[1]

The US Code (Title 18 Crimes and Criminal Procedure) specifies with total clarity what rioting is:

“...a public disturbance involving (1) an act or acts of violence by one or more persons part of an assemblage of three or more persons, which act or acts shall constitute a clear and present danger of, or shall result in, damage or injury to the property of any other person or to the person of any other individual or (2) a threat or threats of the commission of an act or acts of violence by one or more persons part of an assemblage of three or more persons having, individually or collectively, the ability of immediate execution of such threat or threats, where the performance of the threatened act or acts of violence would constitute a clear and present danger of, or would result in, damage or injury to the property of any other person or to the person of any other individual.

As used in this chapter, the term “to incite a riot”, or “to organize, promote, encourage, participate in, or carry on a riot”, includes, but is not limited to, urging or instigating other persons to riot, but shall not be deemed to mean the mere oral or written (1) advocacy of ideas or (2) expression of belief, not involving



In June 2017, Delcy Rodríguez (Centre), Venezuela's Minister of Foreign Affairs decided to step down in order to run in the campaign for the Constituent Assembly

advocacy of any act or acts of violence or assertion of the rightness of, or the right to commit, any such act or acts.”

Of the over 60 persons who have lost their lives so far, only seven deaths have been attributed to government authorities, and those responsible have been charged and currently face prosecution. The full list of fatal victims of the wave of violence is as follows:

> **14 during looting:** eight of whom died electrocuted when they intended to loot a bakery in El Valle; one died during another looting when the owner shot him dead; and the owner of a small restaurant was killed by the looters;

> **9 in street barricades:** most of whom died when trying to cross them leading to their vehicles overturning and/or were confronted by violent armed demonstrators who were guarding the barricades;

> **7 by law and order officers:** the culprits have been identified, all have been arrested and all face prosecution; 29 is the total number of officers arrested for these deaths;

> **3 shot by firearms:** arms fired by criminal gangs

> **2 by lynching:** a retired lieutenant of the Bolivarian national Guard and a young man who was participating in opposition demonstrations was set on fire alive and died due to 80% of body burning

> **1 health condition:** a person could not get to an emergency health centre due to the street blockade installed by armed opposition gangs

> **1 in a fight:** among members of a gang in a

barricade;

> **17 passers-by:** who had no connection whatsoever with either opposition protests or government demonstrations – one of them, Almeline Carrillo, was killed by being hit in the head by a bottle containing frozen water thrown from a building by opposition lawyer Hugo Trejo;

> **3 members of the law & order forces:** one of them was shot dead by a sniper, the other two were brutally killed by opposition protesters

> **24 other persons have died:** in unclear circumstances and are still under investigation – six of these have died by being hit with ball bearings fired from “metras”, home made guns, used by opposition protesters; two of them would be passers by; two more would have died by the action of the forces of law and order.[2]

The Venezuelan authorities are doing everything in their power to investigate those deaths and charge the perpetrators, regardless of their political allegiance.

In this context it is important to point out one more time that **Leopoldo Lopez is not a political prisoner**. He was indicted and has been charged for publicly instigating violence, asking protesters to use non-peaceful means in order to overthrow the government of Nicolas Maduro, and about which there is irrefutable public evidence. And **Henrique Capriles**, was charged and banned from public office because of illicit administrative practices during his tenure as a governor of the Miranda state, not because of his role as an opposition leader.

3) FOOD SHORTAGES:



Food shortages in Venezuela are not due to the fact that Venezuela has run out of financial means. Just about a month ago Venezuela repaid US\$2.7 billion on its debt. Food and medical shortages are created artificially by the blocking of opposition-controlled production and distribution channels. Evidence for Economic Warfare has been collected by numerous academics. Their research is available at <http://www.15yultimo.com/>. [3] The economic war that was unleashed against Venezuela in around 2012 has the following components:

- > Hoarding of basic foodstuffs and items of basic necessities including medicines
- > Gigantic operations of contraband of foodstuffs, items of basic necessities and gasoline to Colombia to take advantage of the massive exchange rate differential thus selling them at several times their Venezuelan, heavily-subsidised, prices
- > Currency speculation taking advantage of the Bolivar's low exchange rate which occurs on a large scale principally in the municipality of Cucuta, across the border in Colombia
- > Catastrophic fall of the oil price brought about deliberately as a geopolitical weapon aimed at crushing the economies of Russia, Iran and Venezuela (in 2008 the world price of oil was US\$148 the barrel, by 2016 had fallen below US\$28 the barrel, in consequence the Venezuelan government lost about 85% of its revenues in hard currency)
- > International financial blockade of Venezuela thus seeking to make it impossible for our nation to obtain credits in the international financial market.

All of these aspects of the economic war

against Venezuela take place in a highly unfavourable world context for commodity-producing nations because they were all hit very hard by the world "credit crunch" which has also affected the advanced economies most of whom went into acute crises. In short, most of the economic difficulties Venezuela faces are either domestically induced or externally generated.

On top of this, last month Julio Borges, head of the Venezuelan parliament, sent more than a dozen letters to major banks asking them not to carry out transactions with the Venezuelan government. The financial blockade is a central component on the ongoing economic war against our country. The strategy to artificially create a situation where basic foodstuffs and medicines are in short supply is not new. The same happened to Chile in the early seventies, where economic warfare was one of the many dirty methods used to oust the democratically elected government of the socialist President Salvador Allende. In spite of the intensity of the ongoing economic warfare against Venezuela, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has declared Venezuela a country where the percentage of undernourished persons, relative to the whole population, was less than 5 % during the years 2014-2016 (the same percentage as in Western Europe), that is, though there are problems, there is no humanitarian crisis in Venezuela.

4) POSTPONEMENT OF REGIONAL ELECTIONS:

Postponement of the regional elections has been falsely portrayed as a government "strategy" to suppress elections altogether. In reality, the main reason for the postponement

was to give smaller parties the chance to comply with all legal requirements necessary (first and foremost the 0,5 % signature threshold) in order to participate in elections, as indicated in the "Law on Political Parties, Public Assemblies

and Demonstrations" (Title I, Chapter III, Article 26). Nonetheless, on 23 May, the National Electoral Council (CNE) set 10 December 2017 as the date for regional elections in Venezuela. Yet, despite the fact the Venezuela's right wing opposition has unleashed the current wave of violence on the false argument that elections have been totally suppressed in Venezuela, instead of welcoming the CNE announcement of regional elections in Dec 2017 as a victory, they have instead rejected it and have strongly hinted that they would boycott these elections (something they also did to their detriment in 2005). In other words, we confront an opposition that does not believe in democracy.

It is important to stress here that the 19 elections held throughout the last 17 years, have all been declared as completely transparent, free and fair by the Carter Centre, the Organization of American States, European Union observers and other international election observers.

5) WHY HAS THERE NOT BEEN A RECALL REFERENDUM?

The answer is simple: according to the Venezuelan Constitution, a recall referendum needs to be carried out before half-term of the leader who may be recalled from office (Arts 72 and 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution). Opposition parties had not presented the signatures necessary for the referendum before half-term (July 2016). Carrying out a recall referendum after that deadline would be unconstitutional, just like calling general elections outside the period established in our Constitution would be unlawful. Venezuela is the only country in the world that can recall elected representatives at every level.

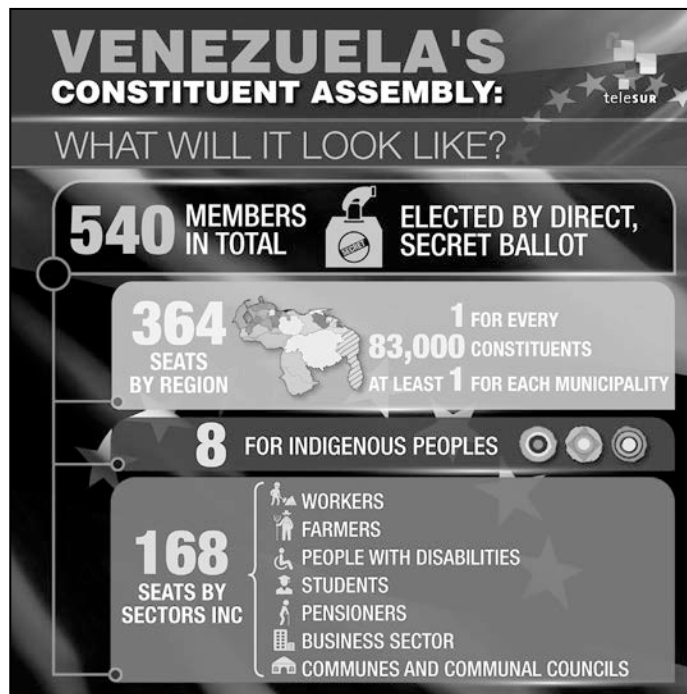


6) SEPARATION OF POWERS DOES EXIST IN VENEZUELA

Separation of powers in Venezuela exists within the framework of the principles stipulated in the 1999 Constitution, as it is the case in most countries. The best example of this has been the recent debate about the Supreme Court (TSJ) on the National Assembly, after stating that Parliament remained in contempt of Supreme Court previous rulings. The opposition-led National Assembly repeatedly refused to process ordinary, uncontroversial but above all constitutional initiatives from the government, such as investment decisions, financing of infrastructure projects, and so forth. The Supreme Court made a ruling to itself approve such Executive initiatives from there on. Venezuela's Attorney General disagreed on the grounds that it might contravene some principles of the Constitution. Faced with a divergence that emerged among two key state bodies – normal in any nation, which conclusively confirms the independence of all state bodies – the matter was resolved through a discussion in the appropriate body, the Defence Council of the State.

7) VENEZUELA LEAVING THE OAS

The General Secretary of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, has violated the fundamental principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states, acting against a number of articles of the OAS Charter. Almagro's almost daily statements against the government of Venezuela have no precedent even in the murky story of the OAS. Every single such statement by Almagro on Venezuela breaks not only the sacred principle of non interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation but they also scandalously contravenes the OAS own Charter which in its Article 1, stipulates that *"The Organization of American States has no powers other than those expressly conferred upon it by this Charter, none of whose provisions authorizes it to intervene in matters that are within the internal jurisdiction of the Member States."* Despite repeated attempts by the OAS



On April 6, 2017 "Youth of the Street" & youth from the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) march for Peace & Sovereignty

Secretary General to apply the Democratic Charter against Venezuela and suspend it from the OAS, this has failed. It is important to stress here that the OAS has never taken the decision to apply the Democratic Charter to Venezuela as Almagro and many media keep falsely asserting. Furthermore, *none* of Luis Almagro's pronouncements against the government of Venezuela have ever got the endorsement of the OAS, of any of its bodies or the OAS Permanent Council (though there are some governments in the region that do share Almagro's views on Venezuela, notably Brazil's Temer *golpista* government). Nevertheless, working hand in hand with the Venezuelan opposition and the US government, Secretary Almagro has abused his role in order to help create an impression of Venezuela as a failed state and put pressure on other countries to do so as well, with the explicit intention to bring about external intervention. Such development has no precedent in the history of OAS. His actions

have prompted calls for resignation by Chilean legislators, the Bolivian Foreign Ministry and progressive social movements in the region, such as the Salvadorian Network in Solidarity with Venezuela.

8) US ILLEGAL FINANCING OF VENEZUELA'S OPPOSITION: 'REGIME CHANGE'

As part of her research, Eva Golinger, an American solicitor, has revealed that between 2002 and at least 2014, the US Government has channelled around 120 million US dollars to finance Venezuelan opposition parties and organizations[4]. This flow of money represents a violation of the Political Sovereignty and National Self-Determination Act of 2010 that bans foreign funding of political groups in the country. The US Government has sent this funding to Venezuelan opposition groups mainly through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and USAID, all of which have worked closely with the CIA to bring about "regime change" in Venezuela. The spirit of this huge influx of resources was confirmed by President Obama's Executive Order of 9 March 2015, and renewed a year later, which falsely declares Venezuela to be "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States". If you bring this funding to the US scale it would amount to a hostile foreign power channelling the equivalent of US\$6.4 billion to bring about regime change.

9) FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT DRUGS:

Venezuela is not a drug-producing country, but it unfortunately sits between the world's largest cocaine producer, Colombia, and the world's largest cocaine consumer, the United States. This is why it always had and still has to fight illicit trafficking as well as international narco-mafias within its borders. Venezuela has developed a comprehensive strategy to fight illicit drugs through international cooperation, the implementation of measures to reduce domestic consumption, the interception of illegal drug shipments, the destruction of clandestine airstrips, border monitoring measures and the detention and extradition of drug traffickers. Between 2008 and 2012 alone, 102 drug lords were captured and arrested. Twenty-one of them were promptly deported to the US and 36 to Colombia, at the requests made by the authorities of

these countries and in compliance with international agreements on the fight against organized crime. The firm determination to combat international drug trafficking mafias led President Nicolas Maduro to enact a law in 2012 enabling the interdiction of any drug-trafficking aircraft violating Venezuelan airspace. Thanks to this legal instrument, Venezuela has destroyed, disabled or brought down over 100 aircraft belonging to the drug transporting structure of Colombia and other countries illegally flying over our territory. In fact, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDC) recognises these efforts in their World Drug Report of 2015 stating that

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, cocaine seizures decreased to 20.5 tons in 2013 (from 27.6 tons in 2012). According to authorities in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the country remains a transit point for cocaine, particularly cocaine trafficked by air in private aircraft, but newly introduced legislative changes related to air traffic control have decreased the entry and exit of uncontrolled aircraft, which has led to a decrease in drug trafficking by air (54).

10) WHY SO MANY FAKE NEWS ABOUT VENEZUELA?

Ever since President Chavez passed away in 2013 and, even more openly, since the opposition won a parliamentary majority in 2015, Venezuela's opposition has tried to oust the democratically elected government of Venezuela, explicitly stating that their aim as to "get rid" of President Maduro within six months, *no matter how*. As it was clear by the end of 2016 they had failed to do so whether by legal or violent means, so they have adopted an international strategy. Their plan is to create the impression that chaos reigns in the country so as to justify and bring about external intervention. With the overwhelming majority of the media in opposition hands, and with the enthusiastic support of the world corporate media, a campaign of intoxicating proportions has been waged daily against the Venezuelan government. This strategy has already been tried in the past, with the help of the US government, as evidenced in declassified papers.

In spite of all these years of economic warfare, financial blockades, media and psychological warfare against the government of Nicolas

Maduro, we have managed to build 1.7 million heavily subsidised houses in the last three years. More than 1 million people have been lifted from illiteracy and the number of people receiving pensions and students has increased fourfold.

So as to respond to the food shortages resulting from the ongoing "economic war" waged against our government, in March 2016, the Local Committees for Supply and Production (CLAPs) were established. CLAPs distribute food packs filled with the most important Venezuelan staples such as pasta, rice, flour, edible oil, coffee, butter, canned food or salt at a fair price. According to the research institute Hinterlaces, 60 % of all Venezuelans believe that CLAP is the right way to deal with the economic crisis in Venezuela. So far, the 30.000 CLAPs in Venezuela are distributing food packs to about 6 million households.



Even the opposition admits that the CLAPs are working effectively and that they have helped ease social tensions. According to Datanalisis, 50 % of Venezuela's population receives products through the CLAPs. In addition, in 2016 the government created three new ministries commissioned to address the current food shortages in Venezuela: The Ministry for Agricultural Production and Lands, the Ministry of Fishing and Aquaculture as well as the Ministry for Urban Agriculture. The latter in particular is expected by 2020 to satisfy the needs of more than 3 million people through urban gardens, urban parcels, productive courtyards, organoponics vegetable gardens and urban greenhouses.

11) US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS VENEZUELA

It is well known that practically since 1999, US foreign policy towards the Bolivarian government of Venezuela has been informed by (a) an intense hostility originating and (b) its very existence is as an "anomaly" to

be reversed as soon as possible. Thus, the US since 1999 has been centrally involved in every single seditious effort to overthrow the democratically elected and legitimate government of Venezuela, notably in the April 2002 short-lived coup d'état. That is, for 18 years US foreign policy has sought to eradicate lock, stock and barrel, what it considers the anomaly of the Bolivarian government and its policies.

This US framework did not change one iota even when there was a wave of progressive governments that came to office in Latin America shifting the whole region sharply to the left thus historically producing the biggest gains in social progress, expansion of democracy and strengthening of national sovereignty, with millions being taken out of poverty and many more millions being economically, politically, socially and culturally included in their nations. In other words, the Bolivarian "anomaly" spread like wildfire throughout the continent. US foreign policy makers instead of reshaping policy to take stock of the new context seeking to minimise ruptures by adopting a constructive attitude to the emerging geopolitical reality, the change towards Cuba notwithstanding, it launched itself into a vigorous policy of destabilization and "regime change" on a continental scale which targeted Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, but the emphasis was Venezuela where the destabilization intensity was and continues to be the highest.

Following years of open hostility especially during G.W. Bush's presidencies, it reached its zenith when president Obama issued the infamous Executive Order declaring Venezuela "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States" in 2015 which he renewed in 2016, and that under president Trump has taken the form of sanctions against Venezuela officials accused of drug trafficking without bothering to produce any evidence whatsoever. Worse, the US SOUTHCOM has made very threatening statements talking about a "compelling" need to intervene in Venezuela.





On June 24, 2017 a woman holds a copy of the Venezuelan Constitution during a rally in favour of the Constituent Assembly

President Trump and the US extreme right have massively intensified their aggression against the Venezuelan government, but despite that President Maduro insists on seeking dialogue and good, normal relations with the US. Likewise, President insists on seeking a dialogue with Venezuela's right wing opposition. In other words, Venezuela wants nothing more than

1. Demand full respect for international law and unconditional support for our right to self-determination and sovereignty

2. The rejection of any form of interference in our internal matters, especially from the US, international law ought to be respected

3. The condemnation of any form of violence and of any illegal, violent and unconstitutional means to topple the democratically elected government of Nicolas Maduro.

4. And together with UNASUR, the Vatican, the three former presidents and the various countries that have formally joined the process, support dialogue and peace

5. Any existing difference or disagreement that may exist between Venezuela and the US to be addressed and ideally resolve through constructive engagement and diplomacy

12) HOW BIG IS THE WAVE OF VIOLENCE?

Opposition protests are taking place in less than 1% of the Venezuelan territory. The majority of the Venezuelan people wants to live in peace and has grown tired of the

ongoing protests, which make their life even more difficult. Polls persistently show that well over 80% reject the right wing opposition's wanton violence. The Venezuelan government has insisted all along on dialogue and has reached out to include Pope Francis as well as the former Spanish Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in the discussions. Recently, President Maduro, invoking Arts 347, 348 and 349 of the Constitution, has announced a Constituent Assembly to modify the 1999 Constitution so as to unlock the current political impasse and bring about peace. Although fully in line with our laws, this act has falsely been called a "coup d'état" by opposition leaders, who since 2013 have continually campaigned for a Constituent Assembly even collecting signatures for it. It is puzzling they quietly dropped the proposal when Art 348 states that it can also be called by "15% of the voters registered with the Civil and Electoral Registry", something they could easily achieve. The Venezuelan government will continue to act fully line with the Venezuelan Constitution of 1999 and asks you to respect and support its efforts for peace and dialogue. Furthermore, Venezuela's right-wing opposition's alleged central reason for the current wave of violence was the "cancellation" of the regional elections. The National Electoral Council has just announced they will be held on 10th December 2017 but, true to their undemocratic and seditious nature, all opposition leaders have rejected and have said publicly they oppose these elections in the same way they now violently oppose the Constituent Assembly which they once

strongly campaigned for.

We are happy to provide more evidence for every single point mentioned above. Please do not hesitate to contact us at cbalbertolovera@gmail.com

[1] All the information comes from the U.S. Code – Unannotated Title 18. Crimes and Criminal Procedure – See more at: <http://codes.findlaw.com/us/title-18-crimes-and-criminal-procedure/#tld=NE93D63E2CF2444E4AF661A26F1A907B8> (visited 8th June 2017)

[2] All the information about the list of fatal victims comes from "Lista de fallecidos por las protestas violentas de la oposición venezolana, abril a junio de 2017" *Albaciudad 96.3FM*, <http://albaciudad.org/2017/06/lista-fallecidos-protestas-venezuela-abril-2017/> (visited 8th June 2017)

[3] For a discussion in English, consult Dr. Curcio's latest book "The visible hand of the market. Economic Warfare in Venezuela", to be downloaded at: <http://www.15ultimo.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/THE-VISIBLE-HAND-OF-THE-MARKET-ECONOMIC-WARFARE-IN-VENEZUELA.-PASQUALINA-CURCIO-C.pdf>

[4] <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/04/25/the-dirty-hand-of-the-national-endowment-for-democracy-in-venezuela/>

**Alberto Lovera is an organizer with the Bolivarian Circle of New York
<http://bolivariannyc.wordpress.com>*

force.

While Canada entered the war in Afghanistan with false promises of “promoting democracy” and “liberating women”, they accomplished neither and left Afghanistan in shambles. Women’s health care remains particularly poor, with the maternal mortality rate still one of the highest in the world. As in Iraq, many women have been forced into prostitution as a means to keep their families alive. Suicide has been on the rise particularly for women, and often by self-immolation. In a January 2017 report by the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan, citing a BBC interview, 700 suicide attempts within 8 months were documented in one hospital in Herat province in Afghanistan, 70% of which were women.

In 2016, Transparency International ranked Afghanistan the third most corrupt country in the world, at 166 out of 168 countries. Canada is far from innocent, and has its hand in this matter too. One example is from Canadian contractor SNC Lavalin, which came under fire for their questionable use of taxpayer dollars on the construction of the Dahla Dam, a \$50 million project plagued with engineering problems. It was revealed that SNC Lavalin hired the Watan Group as security for the project – a company which had been blacklisted for its ties to warlords.

Canada was also a major player in the 2011 NATO imposed no-fly zone in Libya. Canada deployed six CF-18 fighter jets for the bombing of Libya, and also provided three planes for air-to-air refuelling and two reconnaissance aircrafts. Over seven months of bombing indiscriminately destroyed cities and demolished the engineering feat that was Libya’s water supply infrastructure. Six years later Libya, a country that once had the highest standard of living in Africa, now is in a chaos with no viable government and a new haven for terrorist organizations such as Daesh.

Not to be left out of new expanding fronts of imperialist aggression, Canada is also taking a lead on NATO’s military bolstering and provocation against Russia. Just last month Canadian soldiers started arriving in Latvia, where the Canadian military is leading a battle group on the Russian border comprised of 450 Canadian soldiers along with troops from five other NATO countries.

While this has been Canada’s military expansion to date, where is it going from here? The Liberal government’s recently announced defense policy promises more than \$62 billion for new military spending over the next 20 years. Part of the Government of Canada’s military planning is to add 600 more troops to the ranks of the Special Forces, a section of the Canadian military which most notably are

Canadian Special Forces



deployed in Iraq. Who are the Special Forces which are now increasing? In 2010 the Globe and Mail described the Joint Task Force 2, which are a part of the Special Forces, as “a shadowy counterterrorism force about which little concrete can be said” and “Canada’s most elite troops – the faceless soldiers who go to places they won’t name, to complete missions they won’t talk about.”

The fact is the Government of Canada is not putting increased spending into the military and bolstering troop numbers for no purpose. The purpose is increased military actions, and a greater role in the expanding new era of war and occupation we are faced with today.

Canadian Weapons Exports – going where the Canadian military can’t

The Government of Canada isn’t only positioning itself as a major military power – it is also supplying other militaries around the world with weapons of death and destruction. A recently released federal report by Global Affairs Canada put the total value of military goods sold abroad to countries other than the US at nearly \$718 million in 2016. Although the report is exempt from listing arms exports to the US, as a general rule, shipments to the US account for nearly 50% of all military exports from Canada.

A point which has drawn controversy is that Saudi Arabia is the top destination for Canadian made weapons after the US. Saudi Arabia purchased \$142 million worth of Canadian arms in 2016. This is not including Canada’s \$15 billion sale of so-called “light” armoured vehicles (LAVs) to Saudi Arabia, which are heavily weaponized and anything but light!

Although Canada’s own arms export guidelines stipulate that arms not be exported to countries with known human rights violations, there

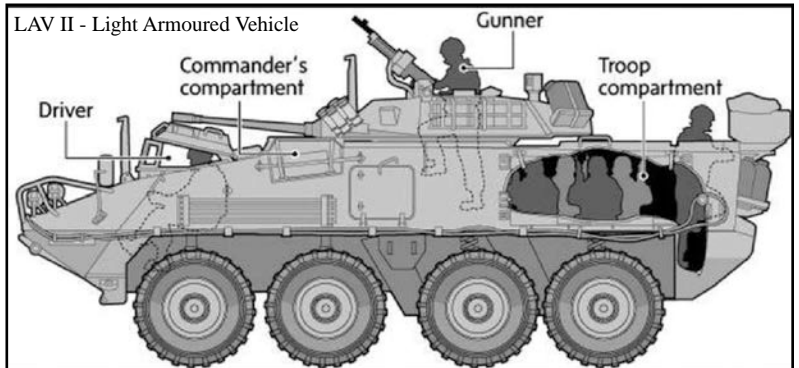
government of Canada goes to great lengths to overlook the human rights violations of its top customers. Saudi Arabia’s human rights violations could take up a lengthy article itself, but to name a few points, the kind of LAVs which Canada is selling to Saudi Arabia are reported to have been used against protesters both in Saudi Arabia, and in neighbouring Bahrain against pro-democracy protesters in 2011. The government of Canada doesn’t deny that the LAVs used in Bahrain were Canadian

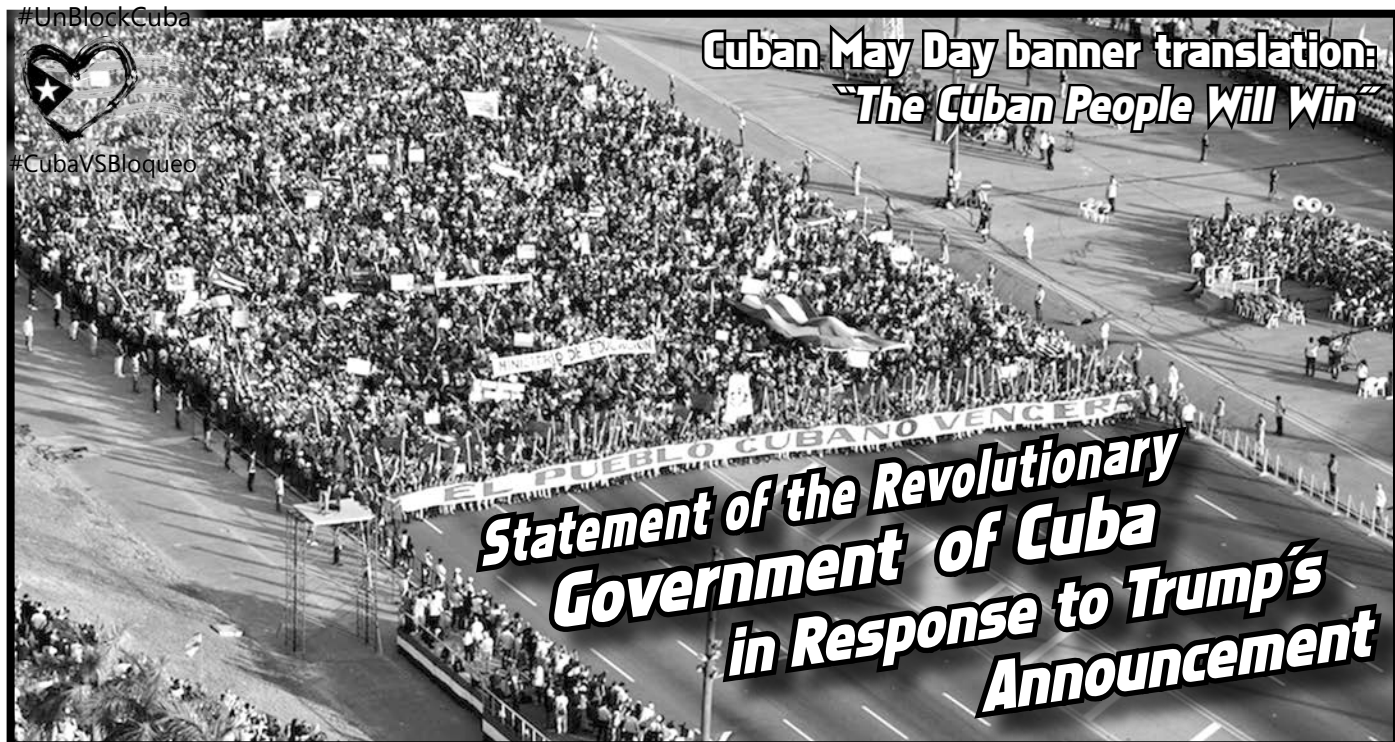
made, and merely say they don’t believe they were used to combat protests. Furthermore, one of Saudi Arabia’s most heinous crimes is over two years of a continuing war against Yemen. Near daily bombing by the Saudi-led, US-backed coalition and a land, air and sea blockade have created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today.

Whether conservative or liberal, the Canadian ruling class has been positioning itself as a military power, at the expense of oppressed nations around the world. As the recent reports discussed in this article indicate, this is only set to increase with more military spending, more troops and more weapons to bolster Canada’s military, and Canada’s role as a weapons supplier to the world’s human rights violators. It is up to peace loving people to take a stand against Canadian imperialism however they spin it – “combat” “training” “advise and assist” or even “job creation in weapons manufacturing”. This all boils down to the killing of our brothers and sisters around the world, the destruction of their countries and making homelands so unlivable that we now see the worst refugee crisis in human history.

While the words above spell out an enormous amount of destruction and killing by huge imperialist forces, this is coming against the forces of the majority, of people who will not give up their desire for self-determination and for a world without war and occupation. Around the world and here in Canada, we must build a stronger, united and effective antiwar movement to struggle for peace, justice and a better world!

No to war and occupation! Yes to self-determination! Canada/US Out of Iraq Now!





On June 16, 2017, US President Donald Trump delivered a speech full of hostile anti-Cuban rhetoric reminiscent of the times of open confrontation with our country in a Miami theater. He announced his government's Cuba policy, which rolls back the progress achieved over the last two years since December 17, 2014, when Presidents Raúl Castro and Barack Obama announced the decision to re-establish diplomatic relations and engage in a process towards the normalization of bilateral relations.

In what constitutes a setback in the relations between both countries, President Trump, gave a speech and signed a policy directive titled "National Security Presidential Memorandum", which provides the elimination of private educational "people-to-people" exchanges and greater control over all travelers to Cuba, as well as the prohibition of business, trade and financial transactions between US companies and certain Cuban companies linked to the Armed Revolutionary Forces and the intelligence and security services, under the alleged objective of depriving us from income. The US president justified this policy with alleged concerns over the human rights situation in Cuba and the need to rigorously enforce the US blockade laws, conditioning its lifting, as well as any improvements in US-Cuba bilateral relations to our country's making changes inherent to its constitutional order.

Trump also abrogated Presidential Policy Directive "Normalization of Relations between the United States and Cuba",

issued by President Obama on October 14, 2016. Although said Directive did not conceal the interventionist character of the US policy nor the fact that its main purpose was to advance US interests in order to bring about changes in the economic, political and social systems of our country, it did recognize Cuba's independence, sovereignty and self-determination and the Cuban government as a legitimate and equal interlocutor, as well as the benefits that a civilized coexistence would have for both countries and peoples despite the great differences that exist between both governments. The Directive also conceded that the blockade is an obsolete policy and that it should be lifted.

Once again, the US Government resorts to coercive methods of the past when it adopts measures aimed at stepping up the blockade, effective since February 1962, which not only causes harm and deprivations to the Cuban people and is the main obstacle to our economic development, but also affects the sovereignty and interests of other countries, which arouses international rejection.

The measures announced impose additional obstacles to the already very limited opportunities that the US business sector had in order to trade with and invest in Cuba.

Likewise, those measures restrict even more the right of US citizens to visit our country, which was already limited due to the obligation of using discriminatory

licenses, at a moment when the US Congress, echoing the feelings of broad sectors of that society, calls not only for an end to the travel ban, but also for the elimination of the restrictions on the trade with Cuba.

The measures announced by President Trump run counter to the majority support of the US public opinion, including the Cuban emigration in that country, to the total lifting of the blockade and the establishment of normal relations between Cuba and the United States.

Instead, the US President, who has been once again ill-advised, is taking decisions that favor the political interests of an irrational minority of Cuban origin in the state of Florida which, out of petty motivations, does not give up its intent to punish Cuba and its people for exercising the legitimate and sovereign right of being free and having taken the reins of their own destiny.

Later on, we shall make a deeper analysis of the scope and implications of the announcement.

The Government of Cuba condemns the new measures to tighten the blockade, which are doomed to failure, as has been repeatedly evidenced in the past, for they will not succeed in their purpose to weaken the Revolution or bend the Cuban people, whose resistance against aggressions of all sorts and origins has been put to the test throughout almost six decades.

The Government of Cuba rejects political

#UnBlockCuba



#CubaVSBloqueo

manipulation and double standards in human rights. The Cuban people enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms and can proudly show some achievements that are still a chimera for many countries of the world, including the United States, such as the right to health, education and social security; equal pay for equal work, children's rights as well as the rights to food, peace and development. Cuba, with its modest resources, has also contributed to the improvement of the human rights situation in many countries of the world, despite the limitations inherent to its condition as a blockaded country.

The United States are not in the position to teach us lessons. We have serious concerns about the respect for and guarantees of human rights in that country, where there are numerous cases of murders, brutality and abuses by the police, particularly against the African-American population; the right to life is violated as a result of the deaths caused by fire arms; child labor is exploited and there are serious manifestations of racial discrimination; there is a threat to impose more restrictions on medical services, which will leave 23 million persons without health insurance; there is unequal pay between men and women; migrants and refugees, particularly those who come from Islamic countries, are marginalized; there is an attempt to put up walls that discriminate against and denigrate neighbor countries; and international commitments to preserve the environment and address climate change are abandoned.

Also a source of concern are the human rights violations by the United States in other countries, such as the arbitrary detention of tens of prisoners in the territory illegally occupied by the US Naval Base in Guantánamo, Cuba, where even torture has been applied; extrajudicial executions and the death of civilians caused by drones; as well as the wars unleashed against countries like Iraq, under false pretenses like the possession of weapons of mass destruction, with disastrous consequences for the peace, security and stability in the Middle East.

It should be recalled that Cuba is a State Party to 44 international human rights instruments, while the US is only a State Party to 18. Therefore, we have much to show, say and defend.

Upon confirming the decision to re-establish diplomatic relations, Cuba and the United States ratified their intention to develop respectful and cooperative

relations between both peoples and governments, based on the principles and purposes enshrined in the UN Charter. In its Declaration issued on July 1, 2015, the Revolutionary Government of Cuba reaffirmed that "these relations must be founded on absolute respect for our independence and sovereignty; the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system, without interference in any form; and sovereign equality and reciprocity, which constitute inalienable principles of International Law", as was established in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC), at its second summit held in Havana. Cuba has not renounced these principles, nor will it ever do so.

The Government of Cuba reiterates its will to continue a respectful and cooperative dialogue on topics of mutual interest, as well as the negotiation of outstanding issues with the US Government. During the last two years it has been evidenced that both countries, as was repeatedly expressed by the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, can cooperate and coexist in a civilized manner, respecting the differences and promoting everything that benefits both nations and peoples, but it should not be expected that, in order to achieve that, Cuba would make concessions inherent to its sovereignty and independence, or accept preconditions of any sort.

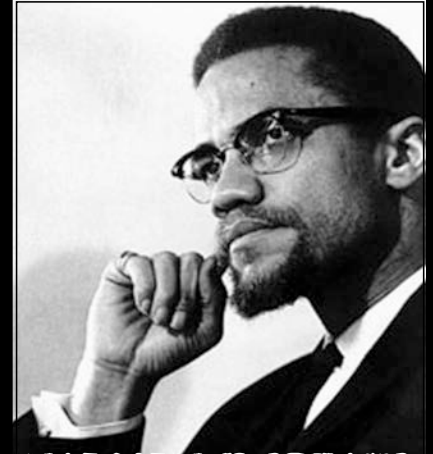
Any strategy aimed at changing the political, economic and social system in Cuba, either through pressures and impositions or by using more subtle methods, shall be doomed to failure.

The changes that need to be made in Cuba, as those that have been made since 1959 and the ones that we are introducing now as part of the process to update our economic and social system, will continue to be sovereignly determined by the Cuban people.

Just as we have been doing since the triumph of the Revolution on January 1st, 1959, we will take on every risk and shall continue to advance steadfastly and confidently in the construction of a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation.

Havana, June 16, 2017.

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

"Basically, there are two kinds of power that count in America: economic power and political power, with social power being derived from those two. In order for the Afro-Americans to control their destiny, they must be able to control and affect the decisions which control their destiny: economic, political, and social. This can only be done through organization. The Organization of Afro-American Unity will organize the Afro-American community block by block to make the community aware of its power and its potential;

[...] The economic exploitation in the Afro-American community is the most vicious form practiced on any people in America. In fact, it is the most vicious practiced on any people on this earth. No one is exploited economically as thoroughly as you and I, because in most countries where people are exploited they know it. You and I are in this country being exploited and sometimes we don't know it."

- Malcolm X at the Founding Rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (1964)

By Janine Solanki

Just over two years after former US President Obama's historic announcement towards normalizing relations with Cuba, the election of Donald Trump posed the question, "what will Trump's policy be towards Cuba?" The answer was given on June 16, 2017, when Trump gave a speech in Miami and declared that he will reverse the gains towards normalizing US/Cuba relations made under the Obama administration. So far this has included tightening travel restrictions for US citizens going to Cuba, and prohibitions on financial transactions by American companies with Cuban companies.

After over five decades of a cruel and inhuman US blockade against Cuba, positive steps were made by the Obama administration which included the opening of diplomatic relations and embassies in Havana and Washington, the easing of travel restrictions for US citizens travelling to Cuba and the opening of some limited trade, air and sea travel. Despite these steps in the right direction, Cuba solidarity activists in Vancouver and around the world recognized that Obama's December 17, 2014 announcement signaled an opportunity, not a promise, to lift the blockade on Cuba, and that it was necessary to increase public pressure against the US blockade. With the cruel



Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!

and immoral actions taken now by Trump it is clear how correct the approach of continued and increased action against the blockade was and is!

On June 17, just one day after Trump's announcement to tighten the US blockade, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver held a picket action in front of the US consulate. These pickets have been organized monthly and in coordination with activists in Ottawa and on this day also with Montreal and Toronto. Protesters brought a loud and clear response to Trump's hostile actions against Cuba, with picket signs and voices raised high to demand "End the US Blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!" Energetic rounds of picketing were mixed with speakers, as well as a welcoming and closing song

and drumming from Indigenous activist and hereditary chief Gordon August. Protesters also heard from activists with Ottawa Cuba Connections at their protest, and the two groups shared chanting between the two cities via telephone!

The next day, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver were also on the streets at the Main Street Car Free Festival, with an info table complete with Cuban flags and banners against the US blockade. The day long festival saw a steady stream of people attracted to a sign reading "Hey Trump - Lift the US Blockade on Cuba!" Festival go-ers were eager to get more information, sign the petition against the blockade, and express their opposition to Trump's tightening of the US blockade on Cuba!

Whether Obama, Trump or any other face in the White House, in Vancouver and around the world justice-loving people are standing in solidarity with Cuba. Join Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver every 17th of the month at 4pm at the US Consulate in downtown Vancouver to demand:

Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!
Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!

Follow FCAB on Twitter @NoBloqueoVan



By Janine Solanki

June 14, 2017 marked what would have been the 89th birthday of revolutionary leader Che Guevara. This heroic figure was a commander in the Cuban rebel army, as well as a visionary thinker that has inspired people around the world. After the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, Che still felt the need to continue fighting for revolutionary change world-wide and joined guerrilla fighters in Bolivia, where he was killed by the CIA on October 9, 1967.

Around the world when people think about the Cuban Revolution, the first two faces that come to mind are that of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. Fidel, the leader of the Cuban Revolution and Cuba's former president, passed away just last year on November 25, 2016, at the age of 90. The world lost Fidel in his physical form, but his ideas and vision live on in Cuba and beyond in the fight for a better and more just world.

On June 10, 2017, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) organized an event titled "Cuba in Perspective - Fidel and

Cuban Guests in Vancouver Discuss...

Cuba in Perspective - Fidel and Che: An Everlasting Friendship

Che: An Everlasting Friendship" to reflect on these two revolutionary heroes, and to celebrate the birthday of Che Guevara. The event was sponsored by Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade, Communist League, Communist Party Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (FTT).

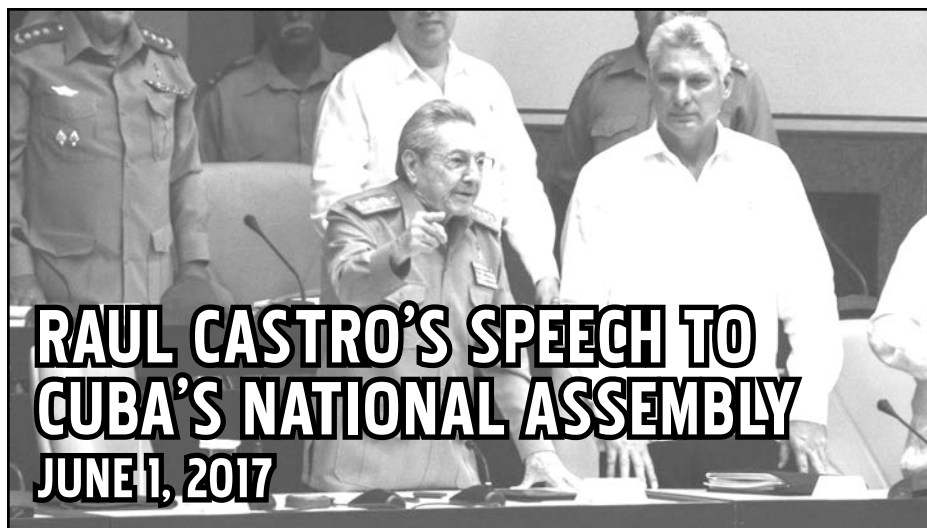
Vancouverites had the special opportunity of hearing from two guests from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), an institute which works to promote friendship and solidarity between Cuba and the international community. Sandra Ramirez Rodriguez, director of the North American desk of ICAP and Yamil Martinez Marrero, representative of the Canada desk of ICAP were welcomed to Vancouver by many people who were eager to hear them speak, and the event had a full house at the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House.

The evening started out with words from Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba. Kelly White, an Indigenous activist and elder, together with the participation of the entire event, led a song to open the evening and welcome the Cuban guests. The program continued with video clips highlighting Che Guevara's life and legacy, as well as videos showing the outpouring of emotion and love from the Cuban people following Fidel's passing. The audience then heard the poetry of Alejandro Mujica Olea, a Chilean poet and host of World Poetry Café on Coop Radio, as well as from local poets Max Tennant

and Shakeel Lochan. The audience then was treated to the songs of Maria Luisa Melendez, a Salvadorian musician and representative of the FMLN Vancouver.

After this beautiful cultural program, Sandra Ramirez and Yamil Martinez were invited up to speak. Sandra spoke about the legacy of Fidel and Che with both factual information and her own touching personal stories of interactions with Fidel. Yamil spoke about the struggle against the US blockade and the strain this criminal policy puts on Cuba, but also how no matter what the new US President Trump's policy is, Cuba will keep true to its revolutionary principles. The Cuban guests answered questions from the audience, including one on the upcoming 2018 elections in Cuba which prompted a very educational response from Yamil on the very democratic and inclusive process of voting in Cuba!

The evening wrapped up with a birthday cake to celebrate Che Guevara, and attendees gathered around to sing happy birthday and blow out the birthday candles together (and enjoy the cake of course!). The Cuban guests returned home to Cuba knowing that here in Vancouver, people are coming together with the desire to learn more about Cuba and are inspired by the huge gains of the Cuban Revolution. For more info on upcoming events on Cuba visit www.vancubasolidarity.com, find Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba on Facebook or follow on Twitter @VCSC_Van



RAUL CASTRO'S SPEECH TO CUBA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 1, 2017

Speech presented by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, and President of the Councils of State and Ministers, during the Second Extraordinary Session of the 8th legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power, in Havana's International Conference Center, June 1, 2017, Year 59 of the Revolution

(Council of State transcript/ Granma International translation)

Dear compañeras and compañeros:

I will only present a few words, given the extraordinary nature of this Assembly, convoked by the Council of State to analyze far-reaching, complex documents, which as we stated in our principal report to the 7th Party Congress, set the course of the Cuban revolutionary process, that of the Party and society, toward the future in the construction of our socialism.

We refer, first of all, to the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development.

Also on this occasion, the National Assembly of People's Power, as it did in July of last year, supported the spirit and letter of the updating of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution for the period 2016-2021, approved by the 7th Party Congress, which now include opinions expressed after that date.

The National Assembly also heard results of the process of discussion on the foundations for the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, on the basis of which this plan will be crafted, which we will submit for approval to this legislature in December of 2018.

The elaboration of these three documents

was based on their antecedents, the resolutions approved by the 6th Party Congress in 2011. Since then several versions have been written which were submitted to the consideration of the Political Bureau for their presentation to the 7th Party Congress.

Previously, a consultation had taken place in every province with 971 Congress delegates and 3,617 guests, during which 1,345 proposals were generated, allowing some concepts to be clarified and foundations broadened.

The 7th Party Congress, given its positive reception of the documents presented, agreed to initiate a broad, democratic debate on the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development and the foundations for the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, with all members of the Party and the Young Communist League, representatives of mass organizations and diverse sectors of society, as well as taking into consideration results of the consultation conducted to adjust the Guidelines as needed.

In accordance with this agreement, 47,470 meetings were held in which more than 1.6 million Cubans participated, generating 208,161 proposals and leading to the modification of a significant part of the original content or wording of the documents.

This activity, which demonstrated the preparation of those participating in addition to allowing for the perfecting of the aforementioned documents, constituted an important opportunity

for the exercise of popular participation in the debate and the decisions made. It also served as an effective means of communication and generalization of the fundamental changes proposed for the updating of our model, and showed support for the economic and social policies of the Party and the Revolution approved during the 6th Congress.

The new versions, products of this process, were debated by members of the Central Committee and deputies in their respective provinces, and their proposals were analyzed in the 3rd Central Committee Plenum, the body which approved, in accordance with the authority granted by the 7th Congress, the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development and the foundations for the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, as well as new modifications to the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution for the period 2016-2021, while agreeing to submit to the consideration of the National Assembly the documents we have analyzed during this extraordinary session.

This brief but necessary summary allows me to reaffirm today what I said this past May 18, during the 3rd Central Committee Plenum, that "These documents are the most studied, discussed, and re-discussed in the history of the Revolution," and perhaps in the history of the Republic of Cuba.

These programmatic fundamentals, approved recently by the Party Central Committee and now backed by the National Assembly of People's Power, reaffirm the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution and the role of the Communist Party as the paramount leading force of society and the state, as is established, with absolute clarity, in Article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic.

This permits us to continue advancing in the updating of our social and economic



Raul and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.
May 1, 2015

model, which is the same as “changing everything that must be changed,” and we will do so at the pace which allows us to develop the consensus we are forging within our society, and the ability we show to do things well, to avoid serious mistakes which can compromise the successful accomplishment of this immense, honorable task.

In this very session, in representation of the genuine will of our people, the Cuban Parliament approved a declaration of support to the people and government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

On this issue, I would like to emphasize that it is necessary to denounce and stop the aggression against this sister country. Imperialist economic and political interests are attempting to deny its people the right to exercise self-determination. Joining the unilateral, arbitrary and unjust sanctions of the United States, are intervention in internal affairs by the OAS and various governments, as well as defamation and crude manipulation of reality - all directed toward overthrowing

the constitutional government elected by Venezuelans.

Many of those leading protests and seeking international recognition are the same individuals who were involved in the 2002 military coup, in the oil sabotage of 2003, and in the violent, seditious actions of 2014.

A hypocritical attempt is made to justify foreign intervention, claiming that they want to help the Venezuelan people, but the only way to do so is by demonstrating in action full respect for the sovereignty of Venezuela and encouraging constructive, respectful dialogue, as the only means to address disagreements.

If in reality there is concern for human rights and personal security, the pro-coup violence which has caused death and injury must be unequivocally condemned. Images of youth being hit, punched, and burned alive by violent oppositionists remind us of the worse acts of fascism.

I reiterate our solidarity with the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, with the civic-military union of the Venezuelan

people, and with the government led by constitutional President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

We also note with concern the development of events in Brazil, a consequence of the methods with which compañera Dilma Rousseff was removed from the Presidency, and with which the Workers' Party and its historic leader, compañero Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, are being persecuted.

We are convinced that only respect for the sovereign will and mandate of the people will return legitimacy to the political system in this sister country.

In this struggle, the Brazilian people have, and will have, Cuba's full solidarity.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Before concluding, I would like to tell the deputies and our entire people that, as we traditionally do in every ordinary session of this Assembly, this coming month of July, we will address other questions of national and international relevance.

Thank you very much. (Applause).

DISCURSO DE RAUL CASTRO A LA ASAMBLEA NACIONAL DE CUBA 1º DE JUNIO, 2017

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Discurso pronunciado por el General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros, en la Segunda Sesión Extraordinaria de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular en su VIII Legislatura, en el Palacio de Convenciones, el 1º de junio de 2017, “Año 59 de la Revolución”.

(Versiones Taquigráficas - Consejo de Estado)

Queridas compañeras y compañeros:

Solo pronunciaré unas breves palabras, dado el carácter extraordinario de esta Asamblea, convocada por el Consejo de Estado para analizar abarcadores y complejos documentos, que como planteamos en nuestro Informe Central al Séptimo Congreso del Partido,

marcarán el rumbo del proceso revolucionario cubano, del Partido y de la sociedad hacia el futuro en la construcción de nuestro socialismo.

Nos referimos, en primer lugar, a la Conceptualización del Modelo Económico y Social Cubano de Desarrollo Socialista.

También en esta ocasión, la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, al igual que en julio del pasado año, respaldó en su espíritu y letra la actualización de los Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social del Partido y de la Revolución para el periodo 2016-2021, aprobada por el Séptimo Congreso del Partido, que ya incluye las opiniones emitidas con posterioridad a esa fecha.



Raul marches with university students during the annual “March of the Torches” to mark the birthday of historic Cuban revolutionary Jose Martí. January 27, 2017

La Asamblea Nacional conoció además los resultados del proceso de discusión de las Bases del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social hasta el año 2030, a partir de las cuales se elaborará el citado plan, que someteremos a la aprobación de este Parlamento en diciembre del 2018.

La elaboración de estos tres documentos tiene sus antecedentes en las resoluciones aprobadas por el Sexto Congreso del Partido en el año 2011. Desde entonces, se elaboraron varias versiones que fueron sometidas a la consideración del Buró Político para su presentación al Séptimo Congreso del Partido.

Previamente se había llevado a cabo en cada provincia la consulta a 971

delegados y 3 617 invitados al Congreso, donde se generaron 1 345 propuestas y permitió esclarecer conceptos y ampliar sus fundamentos.

El Séptimo Congreso del Partido, al acoger favorablemente los proyectos presentados, acordó iniciar un debate amplio y democrático sobre la Conceptualización del Modelo Económico y Social y las Bases del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social hasta el 2030 con todos los militantes del Partido y de la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas, representantes de las organizaciones de masas y de diversos sectores de la sociedad, así como tomar en cuenta los resultados de la consulta para ajustar los Lineamientos en lo que fuera necesario.

En cumplimiento de este acuerdo se realizaron 47 470 reuniones, en las que participaron más de un millón 600 000 cubanos, que generaron 208 161 propuestas y por consiguiente la modificación de una parte significativa del contenido o la redacción original de los documentos.

Esta actividad, donde se evidenció la preparación de los convocados, además de permitir el perfeccionamiento de los mencionados documentos, constituyó una importante vía para el ejercicio de la participación popular en el debate y en las decisiones adoptadas. También sirvió de efectiva herramienta de comunicación y socialización de las transformaciones fundamentales que propone la actualización del Modelo y mostró el apoyo a la política económica y social del Partido y la Revolución aprobada en el Sexto Congreso.

Los nuevos proyectos, fruto del referido proceso, fueron debatidos por los miembros del Comité Central y los diputados en sus respectivas provincias, cuyas propuestas se analizaron en el Tercer Pleno del Comité Central del Partido, organismo que aprobó, de acuerdo con la facultad que le otorgó el Séptimo Congreso, la Conceptualización del Modelo Económico y Social Cubano, las Bases del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social hasta el 2030 y las nuevas modificaciones a los Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social del Partido y la Revolución para el período 2016-2021, al tiempo que acordó someter a la consideración de la Asamblea Nacional los documentos que hemos analizado en esta Sesión Extraordinaria.

Este resumido, pero necesario recuento, me permite ratificar hoy lo que expresé el pasado 18 de mayo en el Tercer Pleno del Comité Central de que “éstos son los documentos más estudiados, discutidos y rediscutidos en la historia de la Revolución”, y tal vez de la historia de la República de Cuba.

Estos fundamentos programáticos, aprobados recientemente por el Comité Central del Partido y respaldados ahora por la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, reafirman el carácter socialista de la Revolución Cubana y el papel del Partido Comunista como fuerza dirigente superior de la sociedad y del Estado, según lo establece, con absoluta nitidez, el Artículo 5 de la Constitución



Rally Honouring Fidel in Havana. November 29, 2016

de la República.

Ello nos permitirá continuar avanzando en la actualización de nuestro modelo económico y social, o lo que es lo mismo, “cambiar todo lo que debe ser cambiado”; y lo haremos a la velocidad que nos permitan el consenso que forjemos al interior de nuestra sociedad y la capacidad que demostremos de hacer bien las cosas, para evitar graves errores que puedan comprometer el cumplimiento exitoso de esta gigantesca y honrosa tarea.

En esta propia sesión y en representación de la voluntad genuina de nuestro pueblo, el Parlamento cubano aprobó una declaración de respaldo al pueblo y gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.

Sobre el tema, quiero enfatizar que es necesario denunciar y detener la agresión que sufre la hermana nación. Intereses políticos y económicos imperialistas tratan de impedir el ejercicio de la libre determinación por parte de su pueblo. A las arbitrarias e injustas sanciones unilaterales estadounidenses se unen la intervención en sus asuntos internos por parte de la OEA y de varios gobiernos,

la difamación y la manipulación grosera de la realidad, todo ello dirigido al derrocamiento del gobierno constitucional electo por los venezolanos.

Muchos de los que lideran las protestas y reclaman reconocimiento internacional son los mismos del golpe militar del 2002, son los del golpe petrolero del 2003 y de los actos de violencia golpista del 2014.

Se intenta justificar hipócritamente la injerencia extranjera, pregonando que se quiere ayudar a los venezolanos, sin embargo, la única manera de hacerlo es mostrando con hechos el pleno respeto a la soberanía de Venezuela y alentando el diálogo constructivo y respetuoso, como única vía para encauzar las diferencias.

Si en realidad preocupan los derechos humanos y la integridad de las personas, debe condenarse inequívocamente la violencia golpista que ha causado muertos y heridos. Las imágenes de jóvenes golpeados, apuñalados y quemados vivos por violentos opositores, recuerdan los peores actos del fascismo.

Reitero nuestra solidaridad con la Revolución bolivariana y chavista, con la unión cívico-militar del pueblo venezolano y con el gobierno encabezado por el presidente constitucional Nicolás

Maduro Moros.

También observamos con preocupación el desarrollo de los acontecimientos en Brasil, consecuencia de los métodos con que fue separada de la presidencia la compañera Dilma Rousseff, y son perseguidos el Partido de los Trabajadores y su líder histórico, el compañero Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Estamos persuadidos de que solo el respeto a la voluntad soberana y al mandato del pueblo devolverán la legitimidad al sistema político del hermano país.

En esa lucha, el pueblo brasileño cuenta y contará con toda la solidaridad de Cuba.

Compañeras y compañeros:

Antes de concluir, deseo expresar a los diputados y a todo nuestro pueblo, que como tradicionalmente hacemos en cada sesión ordinaria de esta Asamblea, el próximo mes de julio abordaremos otras cuestiones del acontecer nacional e internacional.

Muchas gracias (Aplausos).

NO SITE C DAM! CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!

By Thomas Davies

The Climate Convergence coalition continued its campaign of monthly climate justice actions with another successful "IntersACTION" in front of a Royal Bank in downtown Vancouver on Saturday, June 15. The action continued with the demand to Stop the Kinder Morgan Pipeline, but also added the urgent demand to Stop the Site C Dam as the campaign to stop this dangerous mega-project is gaining momentum.

Site C violates First Nations Treaty Rights, and would flood more than 9550 hectares of land, including enough farmland to feed 1 million people. The added electricity has proven to be unnecessary, and the completed project would cost taxpayers at least \$8.8 billion.

While Kinder Morgan's stock price is faltering based on investor scepticism because of widespread public opposition, the corporation and the Canadian government have both vowed to build pipeline expansion which could ship

SUCCESSFUL MONTHLY INTERACTIONS CONTINUE TO SPREAD AWARENESS & ENGAGE NEW PEOPLE

890,000 barrels a day of dirty tar sands oil.

The monthly actions have targeted banks which have direct ties to financing these projects. This action came as over two dozen environmental and Indigenous groups sent a letter to the CEOs of 14 major Canadian and international banks demanding that they stop funding Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

Organizers set up an information table in front of the bank at one of the busiest intersections in Vancouver. On hand were copies of the letter to the banks, as well as information and petitions to sign against the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion and Site C Dam.

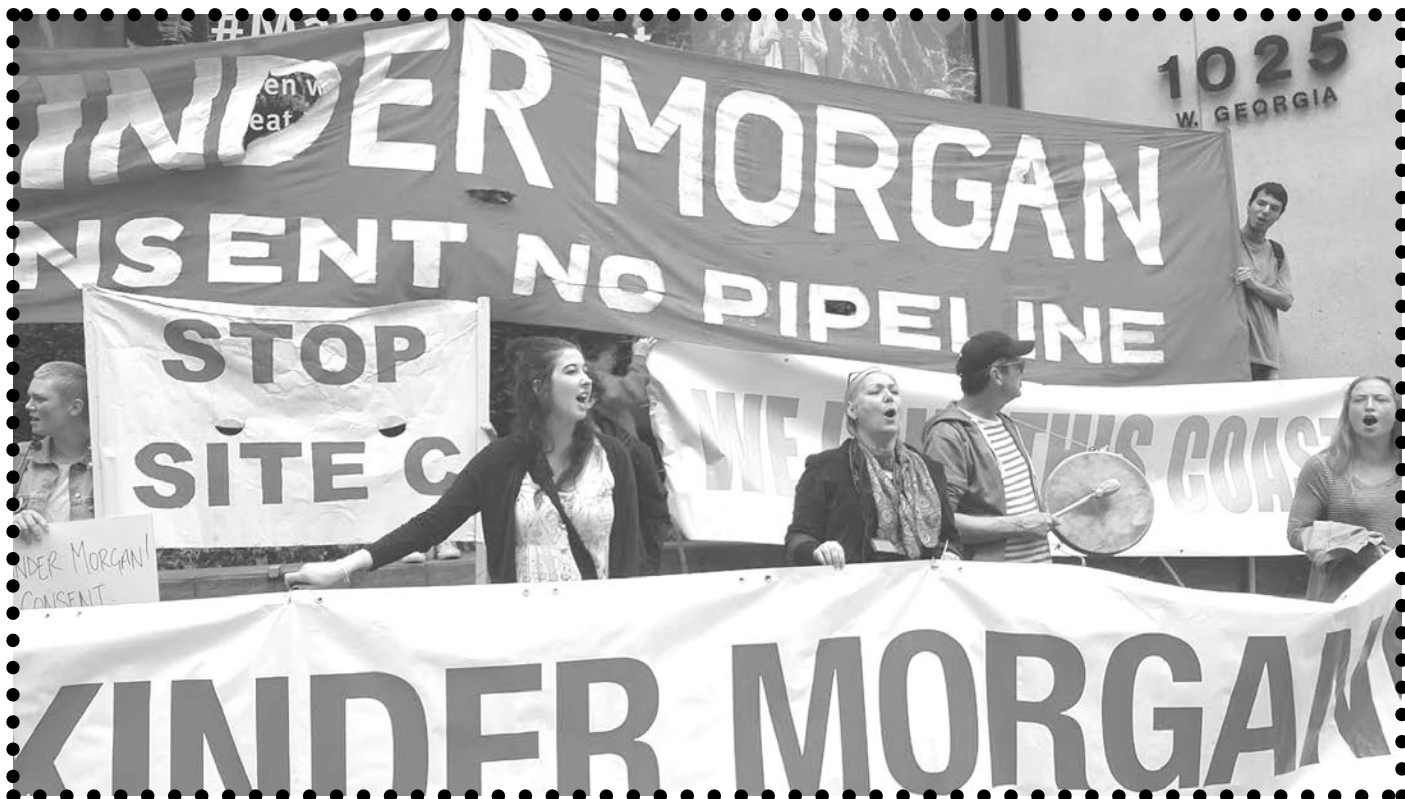
For two hours a continual stream of people marched with signs and banners, chanting loudly enough to be heard across downtown and engaging the thousands of people walking and driving by. Many honked and stopped to get materials from the table. Members of the BC Government Employees Union, who were attending a convention close by, also came out to support.

The IntersAction happened during a critical time in BC politics, as Christy Clark tried to stall and manoeuvre to remain Premier and Justin Trudeau, Kinder Morgan and BC Hydro all doubled down on their claims that these projects will be built regardless of who formed a government in BC and regardless of public opposition.

The loud, high energy action and the positive response from the public reaffirmed that we have known all along: people have not given up the fight to stop these projects, regardless of what governments or corporations say. Now is more important than ever to stand up for the people and the planet!

With actions like these, we can continue sending a strong message that we will continue to be active in building a movement to defeat these projects, protect our communities and build the better world we all know is possible.

NO KINDER MORGAN PIPELINE!
STOP SITE C DAM!
CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!



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OUR HERITAGE



Alexandra Kollontai

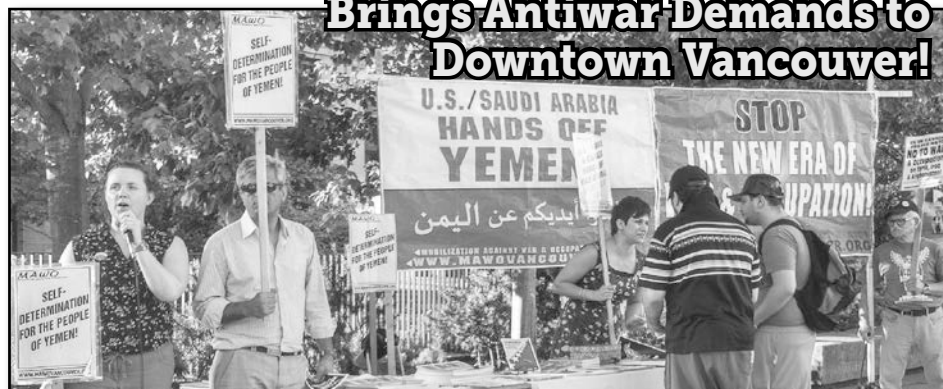
1872-1952

Russian revolutionary socialist leader

"The major capitalist powers, those who are now at war with each other, all experience the same need for a world market, for colonies. Each power thinks only of how it can bring under its control the colonies and markets of other countries, either by diplomatic deception and by bribing the governments and capitalists in the weak and dependent countries, or by force of arms. Colonies and domination of the world market are the causes of the disputes that flare up among the major modern powers. Each wishes to monopolize (i.e., to be the sole master of) the market, each wishes to take all the profit for itself alone. To begin with, these powers try to resolve the dispute by "diplomatic negotiations" in which each strives to trick or outwit the other. Even in times of peace, the negotiations conducted by the diplomats never cease. However, no information is given to the people. The dispute among the capitalist states is being conducted not on behalf of the people, but on behalf of the capitalists, and these capitalist private property owners push their states onto the path of so-called colonial or "imperialist" policy. It is they who decide whether or not there will be war. And the people? They need to know only one thing: if you are called up- go and die!"

Excerpt from Alexandra Kollontai's
"Who Needs the War?" (1915)

Mobilization Against War and Occupation Brings Antiwar Demands to Downtown Vancouver!



By Janine Solanki

In the few short months that Donald Trump has been president of the United States, we've had plenty of opportunities to see that his war-mongering rhetoric has been followed up by war-mongering actions. This has included escalating the US war drive against Syria. On April 6th Trump ordered a cruise missile attack on a Syrian airbase with 59 Tomahawk missiles. On June 18th an American fighter jet shot down a Syrian jet, marking the first air to air attack by the US against Syrian forces. Now more than ever it is the responsibility of antiwar activists, organizations and all peace-loving people to come out in protest against this new era of war and occupation, which started with the 2001 US war and occupation of Afghanistan and not long after the invasion of Iraq, and is now being accelerated under US President Trump.

In Vancouver, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has held an antiwar rally and petition drive every month for almost 14 years. This month's rally and petition drive on June 23rd focused on demanding "US/Canada/NATO: Hands Off Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Venezuela and North Korea!" On a busy Friday afternoon in downtown Vancouver, the streets were full of people going about their day, many of whom were attracted by the antiwar banners and picket signs and stopped at the information table to pickup antiwar newsletters and talk to organizers. Teams of activists approached passers-by to collect petition signatures demanding Canada end its \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia. This issue

was especially relevant as news had broke the day before about the brutal torture of Yemeni detainees by United Arab Emirates forces, who are part of the Saudi-led coalition that has been waging a devastating war against Yemen for over two years. Along with implicating U.S. military officials in this torture, the report brought Canada's arms deal with Saudi Arabia into sharper focus. A recent federal report on arms sales revealed that not only is Canada supplying armoured military vehicles to Saudi Arabia for \$15 billion, but that after the U.S., Saudi Arabia is the top destination for Canadian arms exports. How can the government of Canada claim to defend human rights, when they are a top supplier of weapons of death to a country that inflicts Yemen with daily bombings and an air, land and sea blockade resulting in one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today, as well as is overseeing the torture of Yemeni people!

Petition signatures, positive conversations and new people signing up to find out about upcoming events and actions were all good indicators that people in Vancouver are increasingly opposed to this new era of war and occupation, and want to get involved in standing against war and for peace. Along with MAWO's monthly antiwar rally and petition drive, people can get involved and attend MAWO's regular public forums, cultural events and other actions. *For more info visit www.mawovancouver.org, find MAWO on facebook or follow on Twitter @mawovan.*

No to War and Occupation!

Yes to Self-Determination!



THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CUBA STATEMENT ON U.S. PRESIDENT TRUMP'S CUBA ANNOUNCEMENT

1 THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CUBA, THE LEADING INSTITUTION OF THE CUBAN ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT, is made up of 51 Christian and Protestant Churches and institutions - Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Episcopal and Orthodox - as well as Jews and Yogas, centers of study, information, community service and theological seminaries. Since its foundation in 1941, the Council has proclaimed unity for the service of our people and nation, through the search for love, justice and peace among peoples and nations, which are the most evident evangelical signs of the reign of God among us.

2 The establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States brought about a new era based on the new policies undertaken during the Obama administration. It had been the dream and struggle of many who also included churches and religions on both sides.

3 A path of respect and dialogue demonstrated hope to the world that once civilized relations are established bridges can be built and walls torn down. These agreements between both countries, result of the work of many years and of several generations, had and have the support of the wide community of believers at national and global levels.

4 Today, June 16, President Donald Trump has announced another policy that involves a setback in a path that, although fragile, established clear steps in a strategy of coexistence where everyone could benefit and that promised a future of peace and understanding, not only between the two nations but for the whole region.

5 This policy, like others of this administration, does not respond to the wishes of the American people, whose visits to the Caribbean nation skyrocketed in 2016 and continues in the current calendar year expressing and confirming their desire to interact with the island.

6 Cubans and Americans can do much for our region and for humanity. It is not reasonable to enact laws or issue orders that prevent rapprochement and obstruct the will of our peoples. Neither must we, nor can we, oppose the Divine will that these two nations mutually benefit from their religious, cultural, educational, sport and scientific people-to-people exchanges.

7 This policy indicates a lack of information and knowledge about the Cuban reality: our history, sovereignty and rights, as well as those of the people of the United States. It is divorced from the context of the time we live in today. This policy issues from a one-sided monologue that leads nowhere in the 21st century, when humanity calls for dialogue and the search for civilized solutions. We live in the era of dialogue, of mutual respect and two-way communication, in search for and construction of peace without which humanity will not be able to survive.

8 We are confident that this backward policy is not the will of the American people or of their churches and religions, which have always advocated peace, dialogue and normalization of relationships. We also know that it is their will that the embargo be removed, as well as that of nations expressed year after year in multiple votes at the United Nations.

9 We express our gratitude to God and to all his sons and daughters as we continue to seek the lifting of the embargo and the search for solutions through dialogue and peace. Once again we call for unity in prayer, action in the hope of the abundant life to which Christ calls us.

10 We are members of the World Council of Churches, the Joint Alliance of Churches, the Latin American Council of Churches; in fraternity with the National Council of Churches in the U.S. and Church World Service; and companions in mission with many denominations, foundations, agencies, councils in the United States and throughout the world, which is of God. We are sure that together, with our prayers and actions, we will continue to break down the walls and lift the bridges in our pilgrimage for justice, peace and love.

12 We are convinced that the present and the future belong to God and in that sense He calls humanity to reconciliation, so that we learn to love and forgive each other. The blockade must be removed, and Cuba and the United States must coexist in peace, respect and dialogue.

13 May the Incarnate, Risen and Glorified Christ pour out and shower His grace upon Cuba, the United States and all the peoples on Earth, filling us with his blessing and his manifestation to all, guiding us along the paths of dialogue, justice, love and peace.

Rev. Joel Ortega Dopico

President of the Council of Churches of Cuba June 16, 2017

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In Memoriam – Charles Boylan

March 18, 1943 - June 17, 2017

With deepest sorrow the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) informs you that our Comrade Charles Boylan passed away peacefully on June 17 just before 11:00 pm. Charles died with his beloved partner Donna at his side. His children and close comrades and friends were with him throughout the day.

Charles spent his last days in the Cottage Hospice in East Vancouver close to his childhood home. It is fitting that the hospice overlooks the harbour where Charles carried out much of his lifelong work to humanize the social and natural environment and make Canada a zone for peace.

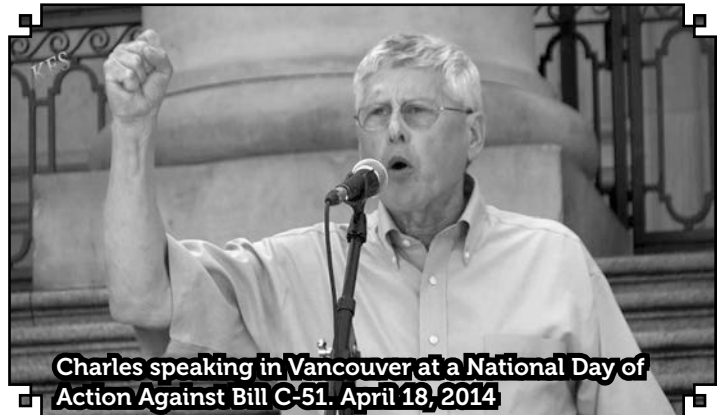
With our deepest social love and affection we send our condolences to Donna, Brendan, Edana, Thomas, his brother John and the entire Boylan extended family and to all the Comrades in BC and throughout the country and his many, many colleagues and friends who will miss him dearly.

Our Charles lived life to the fullest under all conditions and circumstances. To the very end he continued communicating directly with the literally hundreds of people with whom he lived, worked and shared weal and woe, cementing the unity of the people around a modern nation-building project. He dedicated his entire life to the emancipation of the working class and to ending colonial injustice and making Canada a zone for peace.

Charles has donated his body to the University of British Columbia for teaching purposes; a private cremation will follow in due course. The Party will organize a Celebration of Life in Vancouver in September. We will post an on-line book of condolence at www.cpcml.ca/charles for all those who wish to share their grief and experiences with Charles.

Charles made the Party proud. Our loss is great. He will be truly missed.

Central Committee
Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)



Charles speaking in Vancouver at a National Day of Action Against Bill C-51. April 18, 2014

Fire This Time Remembers Charles Boylan A Working Class Fighter ¡Presente!



Charles speaking at the 10 Year Anniversary Celebration of the Fire This Time newspaper. April 2, 2016

Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice sends its heartfelt condolences to the Communist Party of Canada Marxist-Leninist after the passing of our friend, co-fighter and comrade Charles Boylan. Charles has always brought passion and conviction to his work to build a better world. He could be found in the streets defending all causes of working and oppressed peoples, whether local or international. Charles will be missed by all those in the movement and broader community. We also extend our deepest condolences to Charles' steadfast partner Donna, as well as his family and friends.



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